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Te Waka!

Life histories of two contemporary Polynesian voyaging canoes

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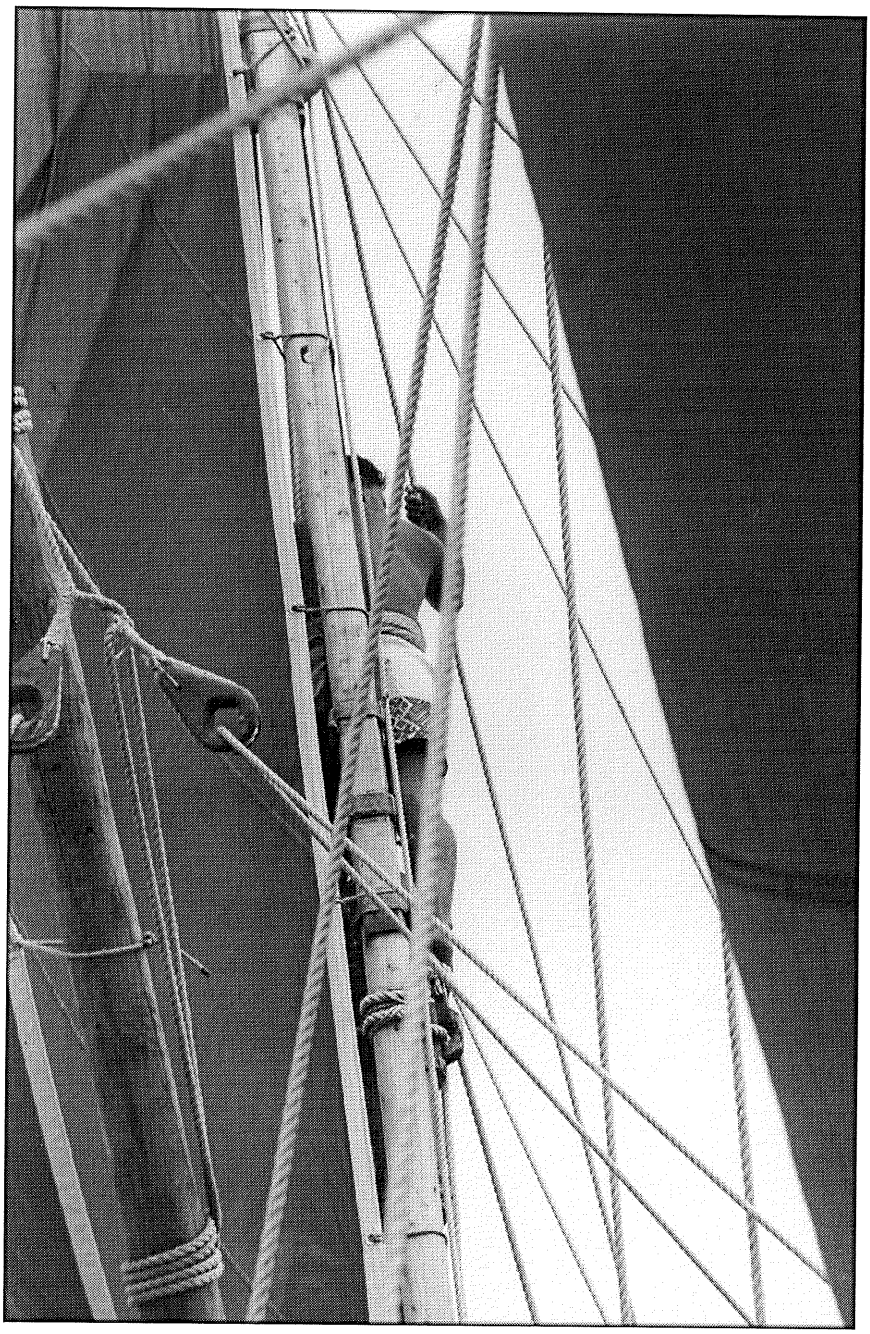

E huri to aroaro ki Pārāwera-nui, ki Tahu-makaka-nui;
Ko te ara tēna i whakaterea mai ai o tīpuna
E te kauika tangaroa, te urunga tapu o Pai-kea,
Ka takoto i konei te ara moana ki Haru-a-tai,
Ka tupea ki muri ko Tai-whakahuka,
Ka takoto te ara o Kahu-kura ki uta,
Ka tūpātia ki a Hine-mākohu-rangi.
Ka patua i konei te ihinga moana, te wharenga moana;
Ka takiritia te takapau whakahaere,
Ka takoto i runga i a Hine-kōrito,
I a Hine-kōtea, i a Hine-mākehu.
Ka whakapau te ngākau i konei ki te tuawhenua;
Ka rawe i te ingoa ko Aotearoa,
Ka tangi te mapu waiora i konei,
E tama, e i!

Turn you towards the Mighty-northerly-blast and the Great-blistering-easterly-wind;
That was the course upon which your ancestors voyaged hither
Upon the deep sea school-of-whales, steered by the sacred ritual of Paikea,
Which becalmed the sea-ways across the billowing-ocean,
Leaving in their wake the flying-sea-spray,
Becalmed was the pathway of the Rainbow god to the shore,
Screened off by Hine-the-maid-of-the-heavenly mist.
Subdued, too, were the billowing seas, and curling waves;
The ritual of the voyage afar off was chanted,
And they rested upon Hine-the-maid-with-the-tattooed-buttocks,
Hine-the-pale-hued-maid, Hine-the-maid-with-golden-hair.
Pleasant thoughts there were of the distant shore;
Sweet was the name of the Long-white-cloud,
And all hearts rejoiced with happiness,
O son, ah me!

Apirana Ngata, *Nga Moteatea*

For my father

Abstract

This thesis concerns the life-histories of the two contemporary Polynesian voyaging canoes from Aotearoa New Zealand. It documents the background, construction and voyages of *Hawaiki Nui* (1979 – 1986) built by Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell and *Te Aurere* (1992 – 1998) built by Hekenukumai Puhipi Busby. It also highlights the historical and cultural significance of *waka* for Māori and other indigenous Pacific peoples.

Based on my field work as a participant in Māori voyaging between 1996 and 1998, I argue that this revival of *waka* voyaging reaffirms the cultural identities of contemporary Māori and other Polynesians. The case studies of *Hawaiki Nui* and *Te Aurere* confirm the ongoing significance of *waka* not only in Aotearoa New Zealand, but Pacific-wide. Contemporary Polynesian *waka* voyaging is historically significant as it revives unique Polynesian skills, such as traditional *waka*-building, navigation and sailing techniques. It is also culturally significant, as it reinforces central Māori (and Polynesian) cultural concepts, such as *whakapapa* (genealogy ties) and *whanaungatanga* (sense of belonging).

At a time when Māori (as well as other indigenous Pacific peoples) are constantly negotiating and redefining their cultural boundaries within their respective socio-political contexts, Polynesian voyaging *waka* are reappearing as a strong symbol of Pacific Islanders' cultural identities. As a symbol of a shared seafaring past they create timeless platforms for Māori and other Polynesians to negotiate the boundaries of their cultures.

Notes & Acknowledgements

Many Māori words and phrases have been used throughout this thesis. Instead of the conventional glossary I have opted to introduce translations of them as they appear in the text. Macrons have been inserted according to the authority of Williams (1992).

This thesis, like a voyaging *waka*, has involved the knowledge, experience, long term commitment and care of a great many enthusiastic individuals over the years. Just as the builder of a *waka* is, in reality, supported by the efforts of a community, so my authorship of this thesis stands for a society of helpers and supporters. Thanks to their combined efforts, this particular *waka* has now arrived at the stage of its launching.

Without the support of the following network of individuals, my journey would have never reached its destination. First, my heartfelt thanks go to the following members of the contemporary Māori *waka* voyaging communities in Aotearoa New Zealand:

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AIM	Auckland Institute and Museum
CP	*Contemporary Pacific*
JPS	*The Journal of the Polynesian Society*
OTAC	Office Territorial D'Action Culturelle (Tahiti)
PIM	*Pacific Islands Monthly*
PVS	Polynesian Voyaging Society
PWMS 1996	*Proceedings of the Waka Moana Symposium 1996*
SWAN 1997	*Smokefree Waka Ama Nationals 1997 Whangarei*
TAEP 1995	*The 1995 Rarotonga ki Aotearoa Rerenga a Te Aurere Education Packet*

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Prelude

1.1.1 Northland 1998

A quiet sound: water splashing against wood. The evening tide is coming into the estuary. Ahead of me, two large-bodied taniwha,[1] mythical creatures from an ancient Māori past, quietly float on Hine-moana, the ocean-maid, keeping each other company in an enduring wooden embrace. A strangely shaped assembly of heads, rhythmically rocking, brings the legendary creatures alive. Expressive eyes blink at me across the water. The reflective pāua[2] shells catch the occasional ray of the setting sun, throwing it away again, flashes of light catching my eyes every now and then.

Quick and confident movements on the back of the taniwha: Māori men busy themselves with preparations for the night. A layer of clouds, appearing above the horizon, is rapidly covering up the evening sky. Tāwhirimātea, the Māori atua (guardian from the spiritual realm) known to control the winds, is stalking the skies. So far he has restrained himself tonight, but the shape and colour of the approaching clouds tell of his imminent arrival. A summer storm is setting in.
"Ho-ti! ... Ho-ti! ... Ho-ti!" Loud calls echo across the water-surface. The taniwha rock faster. On the platform connecting the two bodies, the men pull in a large, reddish-brown sail. Each of the calls is followed by a strong, coordinated pull. "Ho-ti! - Ho-ti! - Ho-ti!" A second triangular sail, the mizzen, is gradually folding. The weathered wood is heavy. Four of the men carefully lower the spar and boom of each mast towards the deck, as their human contours fade into shadows. The upcoming breeze carries familiar noises. Listening, I know that the

[1] "A fabulous monster supposed to reside in deep water." (Williams 1992: 377)
[2] *haliotis*

spar and boom-pairs are being tied up diagonally above the hulls. The detached sails, folded with much care, are now stowed away inside the curved wooden bodies of the taniwha, inside the hulls of the waka hourua, the double-hulled waka. It is a humid summer evening at Mangonui Harbour, in the Far North of Te-Ika-a-Māui, the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. Sitting on the pier at dusk, I listen to every single one of the noises travelling across the water. Again and again, I recognise a sound as one of the many well-known, almost automatic moves on board the waka. Occasionally I hear bursting 'Māori-laughter', a sound which has lightened my heart so many times. Familiar voices, the sound of water splashing on wood, lashings working under strain, wind catching the sails, wood banging on wood; all muffled by distance tonight, reflecting what life is like on the waka. To my ears, this has become a concert of human interaction with history and nature, played by a Māori-Polynesian voyaging waka at the end of the twentieth century. Whether in remote Northland or at night on the brightly lit Wellington harbour, these sounds are bridging the past and the future.

The bodies of the taniwha float and rise in unison with each other and the incoming tide. Their birdlike heads are the tauiho, the carved prows of this ocean-going waka. Te Aurere's carvings are a reminder of its attachment to an ancient Māori past, invoking the powers of the tīpuna, their Māori ancestors, in the present. Their unique shape and style features two beaked and toothed heads, also known as manaia, adapted from an artefact of ancient origin.[3] Recovered from a swamp near the building site of Te Aurere at Tokerau Beach, this taonga, believed to contain strong spiritual powers, was ritually asked to become the kaitiaki, or guardian spirit, guiding and protecting this waka hourua on its journeys.[4] Now, its double-headed contours are rocking in one of Northland's harbours, just like their ancient predecessors, who knows how many centuries ago? Taniwha; guardians from a Māori taonga of old, following the wind and sea... whispering to Tāwhirimātea and Hine-moana, as they disappear into the night.

[3] The original *tauiho* is now kept inside the storage vault of the Auckland Institute and Museum. See 5.2.5 this thesis for further details about this artefact.

[4] Paul Tapsell (1998: 334f.) defines *taonga* as "threads from the past, acting as *here*, or guides. . . .Each *taonga* provides a genealogical pathway bridging the generations, which allows the descendants to ritually meet their ancestors, face too face". In 1991 a ceremony with *karakia*, or traditional chants (recited by *Te Aurere*'s builder Hector Busby) was conducted with this *taonga* in the Museum's storage vault (pers. comm. Hector Busby, Pita Turei and Paul LeNoel; see also Turei 1992).

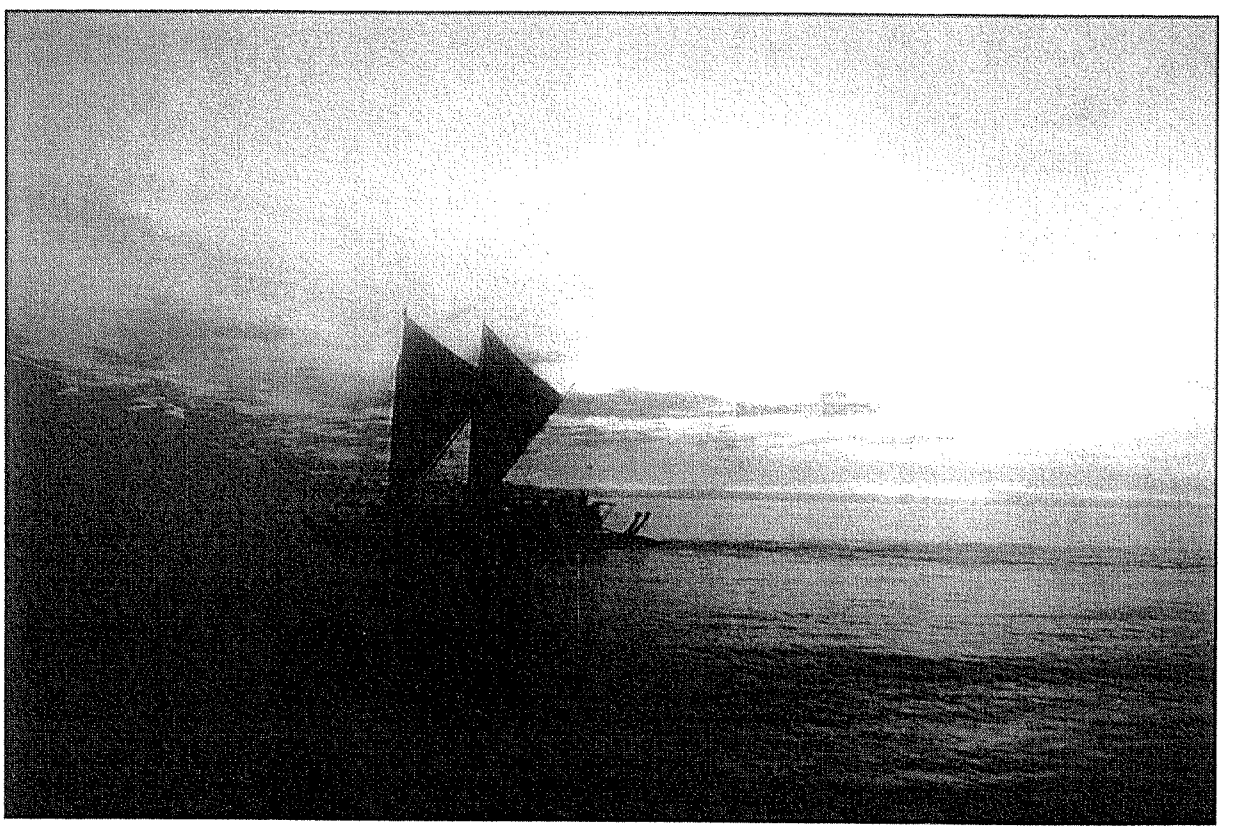

Fig. 1.1 *February 1998: Te Aurere sailing down the West Coast of Te-Ika-a-Māui, the North Island, to attend the opening of Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington. (Photograph courtesy of Paul LeNoel)*

1.1.2 Wellington 1998

14th of February, 5am: Riding my motorbike down Brooklyn hill towards the harbour, leaning against a strong Wellington breeze, I start to feel concerned. The sea looks rather unfriendly this morning, its choppy grey matches the cloud-covered sky. I wonder how the waka, the Māori canoes,[5] are going to get on this morning...

Today is a special day in the nation's capital; it is the day of the opening of Te Papa Tongarewa, the new Museum of New Zealand. There is a constant flow of vehicles down the streets. By 5:30 am it is virtually impossible to find a park at a reasonable distance from Te Papa. Of an estimated crowd of 15,000 people lining the waterfront, some arrived as early as 4am in anticipation of the big event (Catherall and Berry 1998). People are walking the streets as though it is broad daylight. I manage to find a half legal parking spot for my motorbike and follow everyone else, arriving well in time for the dawn ceremony.

From the top of the new museum the sounds of taonga puoro, traditional Māori instruments, break a long silence. The humming noise of a pūrerehua[6] (played by Rangi Skipper) is soon overshadowed by the roar of a pūkāea, [7] the massive war trumpet of the Māori (played by Richard Nunns). This is followed by several pūtōrino,[8] joining in with their female and male voices.

The sounds of the karanga, the traditional calling by Māori women, echo across the city's harbour and send shivers up my spine. The first waka ama appear, long slender bodies with

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[5] For a discussion of the European translation for the Pacific term "*waka*" (or respectively "wa'a", "va'a", "vaka", etc.) as "canoe", and my approach on how I use this terminology in my thesis, see 1.6 this thesis.

[6] A *pūrerehua* (bullroarer; Hirini Melbourne translates *pūrerehua* as 'butterfly') consists of a flattened elliptical shape, usually made from wood or stone, which is attached to a long cord. It is swiftly rotated around the player's body at different speeds, making a characteristic humming noise. Melbourne (1999) describes it as an instrument of peace, traditionally used as a rainmaker in some areas of Aotearoa. Its memorable sound is probably best known as a result of the 1995/96 internationally successful movie-production "Once were Warriors".

[7] The *pūkāea* are from 135 cm to 280 cm long war trumpets, which the Māori made from "two separate lengths of wood ... , hollowed and sealed together" (Te Awekotuku 1996: 48).

[8] *Pūtōrino* are between 25 to 55 cm long bugle flutes "made from two pieces of hollow wood, bound together by the aerial roots of the *kiekie*. Forming a single elliptical shape, the *pūtōrino* had two distinct voices, 'female' and 'male', brought out by the technique of the flautist. Some instruments could be played at either end." (Te Awekotuku 1996: 48) he male voice resembles the sound of a trumpet, whereas the female voice sounds like a

outriggers slicing through a choppy sea. The strong and rhythmical strokes of kaihoe, paddlers, propel these waka ama, or outrigger canoes, towards the museum. Eventually softer sounds, voices of Māori instruments mimicking bird calls, are leading towards a finale of six pūtātara,[9] the characteristic sound of conch shells. These Polynesian trumpets herald the 8am arrival of Te Aurere. Met by two waka taua, or war canoes, the large double-hulled and double masted sailing vessel approaches and captures everyone's attention as she struggles with today's gusty winds. Aotearoa's only waka hourua is arriving at the new museum's waterfront.

Meanwhile the Māori crew off the waka taua, Te Raukura, has come to shore and they perform a haka right at the waterline, challenging Te Aurere's crew in front of them. The powerful response from the voyaging canoe has the 10-ton vessel shaking on the water. Though from my position I can barely see the movements of the mast, images of this haka flash through my mind as I listen to the familiar words. I can recall the strong and passionate movements of Te Aurere's crew from previous occasions.

People around me are also absorbed in this exchange of haka. Watching the excited crowd, I begin to wonder. How many of these thousands of spectators around me understand the cultural significance of these signs of Māori revival? How many of them understand that most of the sounds they now hear had disappeared about a century ago (Nunns 1998, Melbourne 1999)? How many of them realise that this combination of Māori waka (waka ama, waka taua and waka hourua) was unthinkable just a few years prior to this opening? Most New Zealanders might still remember the scores of waka taua launched at Waitangi in 1990, but do they understand the significance of this to Māori? Do they realise that just two decades ago the blue-water voyaging waka of the Māori only existed in the minds of a few visionaries immersed in Māori oral traditions? And that Māori waka ama, or outrigger canoes, now a common sight along Aotearoa's shoreline, had ceased to exist (ignoring the odd archaeological findings preserved in the nation's museums) until their reintroduction from Tahiti just a decade and a half before this occasion?

flute. Melbourne (1999) classifies it as uniquely Māori, describing it as 'the' Māori instrument as it is unlike any other known instrument worldwide.

[9] "The *pūtātara*, or conch shell, was another trumpet type, with a carved mouthpiece and occasionally *pāua* inlay. Such instruments were restricted to martial use." (Te Awekotuku 1996: 49)

Without a single exception, all of these waka have been built, and their local crew trained, within the last decade. Blue-water voyaging has been the most intriguing challenge of this waka revival to date. Embodied by Hawaiki Nui, a recent Māori-Tahitian voyaging project, as well as Te Aurere, the single contemporary Māori voyaging project in the 1990s, the revival of blue-water voyaging is the subject of this thesis.

1.2 Crosscultural Differences

These opening anecdotes are snapshots capturing the fundamentally different contexts in which *Te Aurere* can be experienced today. The Northland anecdote describes *Te Aurere* on the water, without spectators, in the remote setting of the Far North of Te-Ika-a-Māui.

The Wellington anecdote, on the other hand, describes the *waka*'s function as a 'national icon of New Zealand', revealing some cross-cultural tensions in this significant event in the nation's capital. For some the traditional sounds are different and beautiful, but for Māori (and for those with the expertise), these are the sounds of the long lost 'voices of Aotearoa',[10] as Hirini Melbourne aptly calls them. For some, the three types of *waka* on display are simply that, a variety of indigenous canoes. But for Māori these *waka* have a history, they express important traditions and carry cultural meanings, which are not easily accessible for a cultural outsider.

The significance of the dawn ceremony as an event lies in the fundamentally different sets of meanings it entails, depending on the observer's cultural identity. For many Pākehā New Zealanders (and overseas visitors) the *taonga puoro* (traditional Māori instruments), *karanga* (calling chants usually performed by *kuia*, elderly Māori women), *waka* and *haka* fit well into the tradition of Māori as a cultural or national spectacle consumed by the dominant Western cultures (and many of the Māori participants I spoke to were critically aware of this).[11] For

[10] Hirini Melbourne (1999), as a leading figure in the revival of *taonga puoro*, traditional Māori instruments, refers to these musical sounds as the 'voices of Aotearoa'. Māori traditional instruments are made from stone, bone, wood or other plant material, often unique to this land.

[11] There is a long history of cultural appropriation in New Zealand, meaning to isolate particular features of Māori cultures and utilising these within a Western context. In this context, selected cultural features which appeal to Pākehā New Zealanders (for a variety of reasons), such as *waka* and *haka* (e.g., the presentation of *waka taua*, and most recently also *waka hourua*, on national occasions; or Te Rauparaha's *haka* used by New Zealand's All Blacks), have been utilised to form a distinctive symbol of National identity.

Māori, on the other hand, this is an example of their everyday reality of having to somehow synthesise the two different world views they live within: *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) and *Te Ao Pākehā* (the Pākehā world). Some critics might argue, that Māori and Pākehā live in the same world, but, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 174) aptly points out, "there is still a strong belief held by many Maori people that there is a uniquely 'Maori' way of looking at the world and learning. The growth of Te Kohanga Reo would seem to bear this out".[12] For some Māori their participation in the national event is a gesture showing their support and expressing the hopes they carry for their future as Māori in this country, demonstrating pride in their distinctive culture. Others explicitly support the *kaupapa*, or policies, of their *waka* while experiencing the public attention with irony and resentment. This event has its own particular meanings for Māori, meanings which are neither shared by the majority of onlookers nor the public media reporting about 'them'. These meanings only become transparent through an historic perspective.

The following thesis seeks to make two points about the field of *waka* and the Māori voyaging revival. Firstly, the in-depth meanings of *waka* are not easily accessible, nor translatable, to cultural outsiders like myself and the Pākehā majority of New Zealand. I believe it is thus essential to contextualise these meanings *within* Māori (and Polynesian) perceptions of the world, as well as their contemporary perspectives as indigenous peoples. As the anthropologist Franz Boas (1943:11) asserted: "if it is our serious purpose to understand the thoughts of a people the whole analysis of experience must be based upon their concepts, not ours." In this thesis I attempt to show some of the meanings this revival has for Māori, based upon my participation in *waka* voyaging (and my resulting intimate involvement with Māori culture), discussions with Māori participants and contemporaries, and my research of academic sources. Secondly, I aim to put the craft of *waka*-building and the navigational skills of *waka*-voyaging, which have been demonstrated through the *waka* revival, into their respective local historical and pan-Pacific contexts.

For some excellent insights on cultural appropriation, and the context in which distinct symbols of Māori cultures, such as the *waka taua*, have become utilised during the colonial history of New Zealand (in the context of Pākehā New Zealanders' developing some kind of national identity in contrast to other British settler societies, such as Australia), see Gibbons (1992).

[12] Based on my field research experience in a Māori context for over two years, I explicitly support the view that Māori have to accommodate living in and between two different worlds.

1.3 Complexities of a Neo-Colonial Research Context

During my four-year residence in New Zealand I have observed on countless occasions the way in which the wider Pākehā New Zealand public understands *waka* voyaging. Their views are well illustrated by a recent newspaper report from the local media. On 2 July, 1998 the main headline on the front page of the *New Zealand Herald* read "Henare rocks the boat in 'colonisers' capital' [sic]" (Smith 1998). Underneath the photograph of Tau Henare, Minister of Māori Affairs at the time, the caption stated, "'We [Māori] navigated [and peopled the length and breadth of] the Pacific while Europeans were still creeping round the coast in rowboats'" (Smith 1998). This abbreviated quotation from Henare's "provocative speech"[13] (Smith 1998), asserting the superiority of Polynesian seafaring skills in prehistoric times, sparked off numerous polemical letters to the newspaper's editor. Printed under the heading "How come those Maori navigators didn't discover Australia?" (*New Zealand Herald,* 8 July 1998) some read as follows:

> I am constrained to take issue with Tau Henare's claim about the Maori's navigating skills. After all, those early colonisers failed to discover Australia, the largest land mass in our area.
> I would suggest that, as the ocean current swirls away from the east coast of Australia towards the west coast of New Zealand, they simply drifted here.
> M.J. Walmsley. Paeroa.
>
> Funny. Here I was thinking that Tasman and Cook navigated from the other side of the world to New Zealand, when all the time it was Kupe and Toi who paddled their canoes to England. Oh well, more revisionist history.
> A. Edwards. Greenhithe.
>
> I hope he [Henare] . . . turns his hand to writing. Along with James Belich [a leading New Zealand historian], we could have two of New Zealand's finest fiction writers since Katherine Mansfield and Ngaio Marsh.
> David Pardon. Northcote.

[13] The Minister's speech about the future of Māori was entitled "Young, Gifted and Brown" and held in front of "an audience of predominantly expatriate Maori at the New Zealand High Commission" (Smith 1998) in London. The context of this quote, as detailed in the article, is as follows:

> He [Tau Henare] said Maori had never been better placed to take their rightful place as equal partners in the future of New Zealand.
> "Only with the full participation of Maori can New Zealand grow as a nation and reach its full potential.
> We navigated and peopled the Pacific while Europeans were still creeping round the coast in rowboats. Now look at this glittering occasion [bringing back 11 smoked Maori heads from Britain to New Zealand] in the capital of our colonisers." (Smith 1998)

These comments vividly illustrate the tenacity of negative paradigms about the seafaring abilities of prehistoric Māori voyagers, and the strongly negative views of Māori attainment still held by some Pākehā New Zealanders.

Today, archaeological 'hard evidence' conclusively supports the prehistoric existence of extensive voyaging spheres and long-term trading networks throughout the Pacific region (Weisler 1998). Furthermore, valuable insights gained through experimental voyages[14] conducted since the mid 1970s, allow us - much more confidently than before – to reconstruct a prehistoric voyaging scenario. In short, the scientific data base available today, has forced us to finally, and hopefully forever, dismiss misconceptions (such as exemplified by Sharp 1957 and 1963) about prehistoric Pacific voyaging, downgrading the skill and aptitude of the seafaring ancestors of Māori and other Polynesians.

The case for systematic, intentional and continuous voyages of exploration (Irwin 1989, 1992, 1998) in the prehistory of the Pacific is strong, and growing stronger as archaeologists uncover additional shreds of evidence, allowing us to better determine the timeframe and extent of prehistoric voyages (see, for example, Lewis in *PWMS 1996*: 29f.; Walter and Sheppard 1996; Weisler 1993, 1997, 1998; Weisler and Kirch 1996). The voyages conducted by the ancestors of the Māori represent one of the most exceptional accomplishments in the voyaging history of the Pacific, and perhaps of humanity. Professor Geoffrey Irwin, archaeologist and expert in the area, was asked to comment on the Minister's remark and stated that Henare's "'colourful' understanding of maritime history was correct" (Smith 1998). In the light of a now widespread academic consensus, and the foregoing and straightforward confirmation from an accomplished scholar like Irwin (published in the same article), one can only wonder about the level of ignorance displayed by these respondents quoted above.[15] Are these biased views representative of a wider Pākehā public?

[14] Since 1976, the experimental voyaging canoe *Hōkūle'a* (amongst other later ones) has literally come 'a long way' to allow us to reassess Western academic assumptions about the actual performance of Polynesian voyaging canoes (e.g., windward abilities) and the accuracy of non-instrumental navigation techniques employed (e.g., longitudinal difficulties). Furthermore, the method of experimental voyaging (developed to its full potential by the Polynesian Voyaging Society) has significantly contributed to our present understanding of the voyaging process, by uncovering details about other, formerly unrecognised Polynesian voyaging techniques, such as 'seasonal timing' (e.g., the use of wind shifts during summer months in the Southern latitudes; see 4.2.1 this thesis for details).

[15] The fact that even straightforward confirmation from an accomplished scholar like Professor Irwin could not prevent any of these so obviously ignorant remarks, only shows how tenacious preconceived opinions about

Conversely, for Māori it is a strong and empowering experience to realise the extent of the voyaging achievements of their ancestors.[16] In contemporary New Zealand society, it can present a powerful contrast to the negative social stigmas Māori have to confront on a day to day basis.[17]

The ill-informed reactions to Henare's "colourful" (Irwin quoted in Smith 1998) but nevertheless scientifically correct remark exemplify the persistence of negative stereotypes about Māori among some Pākehā New Zealanders. But seen as a whole, the above newspaper episode provides a brief taste of the complex socio-political issues in which this thesis is embedded. Widespread Pākehā attitudes become more visible in response to Māori cultural and political visibility and the latter's ongoing challenges to the Pākehā comfort zone. The provocative remarks are just ripples on the surface. They represent just one of many exhausting (and often polemical) debates rotating around 'things Māori' in New Zealand society and media, highlighting an underlying climate of misunderstanding, resentment and mistrust which unfortunately dominates the attitudes of all too many Pākehā and Māori New Zealanders today.

Any contemporary debate on the issue of prehistoric (or contemporary revival of) voyaging conducted in New Zealand needs to consider the self-perpetuating theme of Pākehā assuming

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Māori (in this case Māori voyaging) can be. Facing more or less disguised forms of racial prejudice unfortunately still seems to be an exhausting everyday reality for Māori people in contemporary New Zealand society (see, for instance, Bellett 1996).

[16] Tau Henare's contentious remark exemplifies my point. The fact that he spoke in front of a predominantly Māori audience is a *very* significant detail that cannot be overlooked. Henare's speech was obviously aimed at encouraging his Māori audience (for the full context of his quote, see footnote 12), as well as possibly representing a rhetoric move, which aimed at provoking the media present. Stressing Māori expertise in prehistoric seafaring and long-distance navigation in the contrasting light of the prehistoric seafaring limitations of the Europeans (their later colonisers) served his cause. Therefore, instead of solely being a derogatory, provocative remark directed towards Europeans (as it doubtless appeared to the respondents quoted earlier), the Māori Minister's quote should be seen as an uplifting and culturally empowering comment in front of a Māori audience. Henare's comment praised the voyaging achievements of prehistoric Māori - at the expense of the British.

[17] My awareness of racial discrimination in New Zealand is primarily based on a multitude of personal experiences and conversations with Pākehā and Māori New Zealanders during my research-related journeys on the North and South Island between 1996 and 1999. Results of other researchers working in a contemporary context informed by Māori (e.g., Bellet 1996), support the validity of my statement. The variety of Pākehā attitudes I experienced (in urban as well as rural settings) ranged from mere ignorance of Māori culture in general, to sometimes bluntly racist remarks and attitudes. For instance, to one of my main informants, who 'looks' very Māori, the experience of ethnic discrimination is almost an everyday reality, many incidences of which I personally witnessed. Therefore the above conclusion is reached, *despite the fact* that most liberal Pākehā New Zealanders (often well educated) whom I have met are at least aware of their cultural limitations in respect to Māori (and Māori issues). These Pākehā freely admitted (and often regretted) such cultural ignorance. They were rather keen for me to share my (very limited but for the great majority of Pākehā rather unusual)

cultural superiority over Māori. This is necessary in order to understand the wide range of often emotionally coloured reactions and comments involved. Undoubtedly this climate of an assumed Western domination and its associated cultural repression of Māori, is still deeply felt by those who identify (and are identified) as Māori today (see, for instance, Bellet 1996). Max Weber (1968: 941) defined domination in society in the following words:

> Domination in the most general sense is one of the most important elements of social action. Of course, not every form of social action reveals a structure of dominancy. But in most of the varieties of social action domination plays a considerable role, even where it is not obvious at first sight. . . . Without exception every sphere of social action is profoundly influenced by structures of dominancy.

The persistent belief in Western cultural superiority has been politically sustained throughout the historical hegemony of New Zealand's Pākehā society. Writing in the 1980s, Angela Ballara (1986:169) observed, that

> Changes have taken place in the attitude of many New Zealanders, but the implementation of political and economic policies permitting Maori cultural autonomy is still in its infancy. Moreover, there are still Pakeha who deny that New Zealand's racial problems call for fundamental re-education of their own thinking. In the 1980s eurocentrism is still a feature of New Zealand society.

The acknowledgement of neo-colonial realities and attitudes in New Zealand is, I believe, a vitally important prerequisite for anthropological research involving contemporary Māori. Both voyaging projects discussed in this thesis have to be understood in this context. Pacific Islands' authors such as Vilsoni Hereniko have emphasised the neo-colonial status of Pacific people, rejecting the current term post-colonial:

> The term *post-colonial* is problematic as there are evidences of neo-colonial practices even in independent or self-governing nations. In the French colonies, New Zealand, and Hawai'i, where indigenous people are still struggling for sovereignty in their own land, the term is meaningless. (Hereniko 1994: 417)

The term neo-colonial, highlighting the persisting practice of Pākehā cultural superiority, more appropriately describes the present cultural and socio-political realities experienced by a majority of my Māori informants. In respect to the situation of Māori New Zealanders, Joan Metge (1995: 311) remarked, that

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experiences and understandings of 'things Māori'. Conversely, Māori often avoid personal contact and initially don't trust Pākehā, being sceptical of their intentions and judgements on them.

> In interacting with Maori as individuals and groups, non-Maori should never forget that the balance of power in Aotearoa New Zealand favours the non-Maori and especially the Pakeha majority over the Maori minority. . . . It is only in Maori settings such as marae and predominantly Maori homes and organisations that Maori are able to exercise rangatiratanga [customary authority] in a meaningful way.

Pākehā dominance and control has been, and still is, the ongoing focus of indigenous politics in New Zealand. Since 1975 though, the various faces of the cultural, political and economic repression of Māori have been officially addressed through the groundbreaking establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal by the New Zealand Government. These recent developments have challenged the tunnel vision of some Pākehā and caused a wider New Zealand public to pay closer attention to issues regarding Māori. 160 years after the Treaty of Waitangi recognised the 'tino rangatiratanga' (chieftainship, or Māori economic and cultural self-determination) of the assembled chiefs, the Treaty has become the principal document through which Māori assert their cultural and intellectual property rights. But many Māori, increasingly frustrated with the continuing low socio-economic status and long-term unemployment in Māori communities over the years, have become disillusioned by a settlement process which is slow and sometimes results in highly contested solutions (see, for instance, Durie 1998: 155-162). Between 1994 and 1995, for example, Māori unified across the spectrum of political views in opposition to the fiscal envelope proposals (Gardiner 1996). These proposals, launched by New Zealand's government in December 1994, caused a significant increase in tension between Māori and the New Zealand government and acted as a catalyst for Māori activists to press "for much wider changes" (Gardiner 1996: 12). Key-events, such as the occupation of Wanganui's Moutoa Gardens, were quickly catapulted into the limelight by the media (and hence the dominant culture) as yet another example of Māori 'radicalism'.[18] Such events immediately preceded my own field research in New Zealand between 1996 and 1998.

[18] For example, the idea of *tino rangatiratanga* (see next footnote) is widely supported by prominent Māori leaders of recent years, such as Mike Smith, Anette Sykes, Tame Iti, Ken Mair, Eva Rickard, Dame Whina Cooper, and Syd Jackson. The Pākehā majority and New Zealand media often refer to these leaders as 'radicals' or 'activists', implying that these are 'stirrers' whose aim it is to upset the otherwise harmonious race relations in this country (see Ballara 1986: 163-167). For example, a recent television documentary from "Inside New Zealand", was entitled "Radicals" and presented interviews with a number of individuals named above (*Radicals* 1997). But nowadays, even the media cannot sustain the myth of 'racial harmony' any longer.

Conversely, recent steps towards redress and compensation by the Crown, and the uncertainties attached to the proclaimed idea of *tino rangatiratanga*, restoring Māori self-determination,[19] have led to resentment, anxiety and fear amongst many Pākehā New Zealanders. Conflicting socio-political aspirations exacerbate the sense of cultural alienation between Māori and Pākehā.

The relationship between Pākehā academics and Māori, the former seizing upon the latter as their 'other', is no less complex and difficult. Many disciplines (in particular my own, anthropology) have "a long and rather unfortunate history of distortion and misrepresentation" (Bellet 1996: 11) to look back upon. Such a background has led, perhaps inevitably, to an academic backlash, which Steven Webster has aptly called "the ethnographic silence on contemporary Maori society" (Webster 1998: 28). This "striking lapse both in research and in written ethnographic description of contemporary Maori society and culture" since the mid-1970s coincides with a significant growth of the political awareness and assertiveness of Māori culture (Webster 1998: 27).[20] Indigenous researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 165) commented on a rise of organised socio-political activism amongst Māori in the 1960s and 1970s, and identified "key events", such as "[p]rotests over the Treaty of Waitangi, Bastion Point, land marches, tent embassies, sit-ins and petitions". In this context, indigenous activists increasingly articulated

> questions about the connections between power and research. Such questions were based on a sense of outrage and injustice about the failure of education, democracy and research to deliver social change for people who were oppressed. (Smith 1999: 165)

The response of some Pākehā researchers[21] to "the sometimes turbulent and self-conscious society outside their doors or on the other side of town" was to completely withdraw from

[19] Contemporary publications by Māori intellectuals advocate Māori self-determination as the solution to Māori problems (see, for instance, Durie 1998; Te Whaiti, McCarthy and Durie 1997; Awatere 1984). To restore Māori 'self-determination' means "the devolution onto Maori of the powers and responsibility necessary to accomplish Maori solutions to Maori problems" (McCrystal 1998). This is an argument of long standing, having been the principal aspiration of many Māori movements seeking political, social and religious autonomy over the last two centuries.

[20] Ballara (1986: 163) observed, that "[d]uring the 1970s the pace of Maori cultural resurgence gradually accelerated. At many levels in Maori society, and through many institutions, a reassertion of cultural integrity took place." This particular era is regarded by some as the beginning of the so-called Māori Renaissance (see, for example, Webster 1998; Ballara 1986: 163-167).

[21] For the "few exceptions to the ethnographic silence" see Webster (1998: 28).

Māori topics and to leave research on Māori up "to Maori themselves" (Webster 1998: 27).[22] Other scholars, who were able to continue in their field of study escaped direct confrontations with Māori by shifting the focus of their research and publications from the politically charged present into the past; or, into the Pacific Islands (pers. comm. Dr. Michael Reilly). And lastly, I have become aware of another strategy - which appears to be particularly viable for foreign scholars - of exporting potentially highly contentious research results overseas.[23] However, according to Smith (1999: 176),

> The challenge by Maori (and other groups) to the research community, demanding that they 'keep out' of researching Maori people or Maori issues . . . did not mean that academics simply took notice of Maori and stopped all research, but that they sought other ways of thinking about their projects and proceeded with far more caution when entering the domain of Maori concerns.

As an alternative to the "strategy of avoidance whereby the researcher avoids dealing with the issues or with Maori" (Smith 1999: 176) - which, as Smith (1999: 177) aptly pointed out, "may not be helpful to anyone" – Smith discussed a number of "more culturally sensitive" options (Smith 1999: 176-178). In retrospect, the approach I took as a non-indigenous, and, moreover, foreign researcher, could be described in Smith's terminology as a combination of the "strategy of 'personal development'" [24] (Smith 1999: 176) as well as "the strategy of consultation with Maori"[25] (Smith 1999: 177). But essentially I write this thesis from my perspective as an active participant in Māori voyaging and a *waka* crewmember. This present work, my *mahi*, is my *koha*, my gift in return, to the extended *waka* community in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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[22] This was not necessarily always a voluntary decision. During the 1980s some Pākehā scholars in Māori Studies were either overtly asked to leave these departments or they were made redundant in other, perhaps more subtle, ways. (pers. comm. Dr. Michael Reilly)

[23] I am personally aware of a social anthropologist at the University of Otago who practises this strategy.

[24] For example, my approach to learning about Māori culture, *tikanga* (Māori lore and customs) and *te reo Māori* (the Māori language) before attempting to do any field work in a specifically Māori context, appears to have been a rather decisive factor in my acceptance amongst Māori (and also fits Smith's criteria for "the strategy of 'personal development'"). I believe that it was such efforts (combined with the fact that I am not a Pākehā New Zealander, but a 'real' *tauiwi*, a foreigner) which initially influenced the Māori participants on the *Te Aurere*-project in my favour. For example, I still remember the warm and positive feedback I received from various Māori crew-members, who seemed caught by surprise when they first heard me speak *te reo Māori*. At the end of the *poroporoaki* (traditional Māori farewell) at the very first *Te Aurere wānanga* I had been invited to in 1996, I stood up after everyone else to express my personal gratitude in the customary Māori way and, of course, in *te reo Māori* as a gesture of respect. Over the years, through my ongoing interaction with Māori crew-members (and other members of *Te Aurere-whānau* and the wider indigenous *waka* and voyaging community), I have also engaged in an open-ended process of "attending *hui* and becoming more knowledgeable about Maori concerns" (Smith 1999: 177).

[25] The "efforts" I made, seeking Māori "support and consent" (Smith 1999: 177), ranged from formal approaches asking the Māori authorities involved (such as Hector Busby in respect to *Te Aurere*) for their

The focus of my thesis is on contemporary Māori voyaging. Two examples form the basis of this study: one very recent and one contemporary Māori project, both of which have revived *waka*-building and voyaging based on their understanding of (in the broadest sense) indigenous Pacific traditions. This central artefact of Māori, as well as of Polynesian cultures, the *waka*, is embedded in a politically charged present (the context perceived as neo-colonial by some indigenous people as sketched above for the New Zealand context), leading me to conclude this introduction with a brief discussion about 'cultures' and 'cultural identities'. Māori cultures, like all cultures, are in a constant process of change and readjustment (accelerated and accentuated by Western influences since colonisation). The projects represented in this thesis are essentially examples of the (variety of) ways in which Māori indigenous cultures recreate themselves today. As with all cultures, those of the Māori are complex, internally diverse, and also contradictory. As Smith (1999: 74) has aptly pointed out, this is not only a privilege of the West. According to Karen Nero (1997: 466), contemporary Pacific Islanders "expand across boundaries creating new canoes, new centred and interacting communities spanning the post-colonial polities". Though Nero here used the 'canoe' in a metaphoric sense, this is, in actual fact, a fitting image for the wider pan-Pacific context of the Māori projects represented in this thesis. They not only involved the creation of actual "canoes", but also, as will be shown, the creation of "new centred and interacting communities spanning the post-colonial polities".

In the context of my thesis I am dealing with 'cultures' as dynamic processes in which contemporary voyaging plays a significant role in the construction of contemporary Māori (and other Polynesians') cultural identities.

> Culture is not simply a cognitive map that people acquire, in whole or in part, more or less accurately, and then learn to read. People are not just map-readers; they are map-makers. People are cast out into imperfectly charted, continually shifting seas of everyday life. Mapping them out is a constant process resulting not in an individual cognitive map, but in a whole chart case of rough, improvised, continually revised sketch maps. Culture does not provide a cognitive map, but rather a set of principles for map-making and navigation. Different cultures are like different schools of navigation designed to cope with different terrains and seas. (Frake cited in Spradley 1979: 9)

For many Māori New Zealanders, current cultural processes may involve a conscious effort of rediscovering the merits of a distinctly Māori (and Polynesian) worldview, while, at the same

permission to conduct my field research, to informal approaches, asking the Māori crew-members on board for

time, evolving and adapting to the dominant Western society. As Hereniko (1994: 427) observed,

> The emergence of ideologies such as . . . *Maoritanga* are partly the result of reaction against white colonial values that threaten to marginalise core values in island societies. These include concern for kin and the land, generosity, hospitality, feasting, merrymaking, and reciprocity. For islanders to be able to maintain their cultural identities and participate in white colonial society, however, a new synthesis is necessary, and elements from the dominant cultures are sometimes incorporated into new cultural constructions of identity.

By relearning and/or reaffirming their 'traditional' technology (as well as skills, language, values, attitudes and concepts), contemporary Māori New Zealanders strengthen their (bi-) cultural awareness and skills, allowing themselves and following generations to develop, live and celebrate distinct cultural identities. From a Pacific Islander's perspective Hereniko (1994: 407) asserted, that

> Our [Pacific Islanders'] cultural identities are . . . in a state of becoming, a journey in which we never arrive; who we are is not a rock that is passed on from generation to generation, fixed and unchanging. . . . After all, cultural identity is process, not product.

Māori cultural identities should not just be interpreted in contrast to the dominant Western cultures, but need to be seen within an enlarged, vibrant and constantly evolving Māori world. Here, the voyaging *waka* are offering a new *tūrangawaewae*, a place to stand, for contemporary Māori peoples.[26]

1.4 Outline

> Canoes are a manifestation of man in his most imaginative adaptation to environment. . . . [T]he canoe to the Polynesian was as the airship or spaceship is becoming to us; a refined . . . exploitation of the world around him. (Dodd 1972: 82f.)

As perhaps the most essential tool in the history of the settlement of the Pacific Ocean, the art of building blue-water voyaging canoes and the maritime skills of the Polynesian explorers (such

their consent.

[26] On another level, this strengthened and refreshed cultural awareness can help Māori localise themselves in a larger global context, such as the Hawaiians are practising in their recent voyages. This connects them with other Indigenous Peoples throughout the Pacific and worldwide. (For a brief discussion of this point in respect to Polynesia, see 6.2 this thesis.)

as navigation and sailing techniques), have been experiencing a recent renaissance throughout the Pacific region. Due to a paucity of empirical data on traditional ocean-going vessels in respect to design and performance, as well as on traditional navigation techniques, these projects have primarily been experiments, attempting to rediscover details of the past; from a scientific point of view of course. By contrast, for most indigenous Pacific peoples involved, these voyages and reconstructed voyaging *waka* have a far deeper meaning. Set in Aotearoa New Zealand, the present work documents and contextualises the making of two double-hulled voyaging *waka* and their voyages. In doing this, I attempt to produce an understanding of what this contemporary revival means to its Māori participants. And last but not least, the accounts of *Hawaiki Nui* and *Te Aurere* are also designed as a structured reference for upcoming blue-water voyaging projects.

This thesis is a detailed ethnographic description of the only Māori voyaging *waka* projects undertaken this century. My goal is to present a "life history" (in Malinowski's sense)[27] of *Hawaiki Nui* from the mid-1970s until 1985, and of *Te Aurere* from 1990 until the present. Though *Hawaiki Nui* and *Te Aurere* both had Māori builders, they are unrelated projects. There are fundamental differences between the approaches taken in both projects. This reflects the fact that there is not one unified Māori perspective on how to revive Māori voyaging. What I found was not 'a' revival of voyaging, but rather a whole range of approaches to this revival which disagreed with each other to the extent that they represented competing political viewpoints. (Different perspectives also exist within one project, often based on diverse tribal and contrasting urban/rural perspectives, as I experienced many times as a crewmember on *Te Aurere*.)

It is not my intention to place any value judgements upon either project or upon the differing attitudes and cultural approaches within this revival. My aim is to document the diversity of Māori perspectives as I found them and to contextualise these, by explaining the underlying reasons for the different approaches taken in the construction, sailing and navigation of these canoes, based on the insights I gained into a distinctly Māori (and Polynesian) world view. The reader will not find a smooth presentation of 'a' Māori voyaging revival in this thesis; rather he or she will be confronted with a range of sometimes competing Māori perspectives. Lastly, this

thesis will also deal with the revival of *waka ama* (in Part One, Chapter Three) and *waka taua* (in Part Two, 4.3 and 4.4), but only to the extent that this contributes towards a better understanding of the underlying dynamics of the revival in Māori voyaging *waka* in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1.5 An Ethnographic Approach to 'Canoe'

> A canoe is an item of material culture and as such it can be described, photographed and even bodily transported into a museum. But - and this is a truth too often overlooked - the ethnographic reality of a canoe would not be brought much nearer to a student at home, even by placing a perfect specimen right before him.
>
> The canoe is made for a certain use and with a definite purpose; it is a means to an end, and we, who study native life, must not reverse this relation, and make a fetish of the object itself. In the study of the economic purposes for which a canoe is made, of the various uses it is submitted, we find the first approach to a deeper ethnographic treatment. Further sociological data, referring to its ownership, accounts of who sails on it, and how it is done; information regarding the ceremonies and customs of its construction, a sort of typical life history of a native craft - all that brings us nearer still to the understanding of what his canoe truly means to the native.
>
> Even this, however, does not touch the most vital reality of a native canoe. For a craft, whether of bark or wood, iron or steel, lives in the life of its sailors, and it is more to a sailor than a mere bit of shaped matter. To the native, not less than to the white seaman, a craft is surrounded by an atmosphere of romance, built up of tradition and of personal experience. It is an object of cult and admiration, a living thing, possessing its own individuality. (Malinowski 1960: 105)

These lines, written more than 70 years ago (and quoted at length above), touch on the various dimensions of 'canoe' I found significant in my own work today, in a neo-colonial context at the close of the 20th century.[28] Malinowski's comments reflect the in-depth understanding gained by someone who witnessed the 'canoe' as a living part of an indigenous Pacific island society. It captures the essence of what an anthropological approach to Pacific canoes should contain. For anthropologists, the canoe needs to be studied in its social context, not only as a functional tool, but also as an object with diverse cultural meanings. It is the ethnographer's job to identify these meanings by studying the vessel in its local environment.

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[27] See 1.5 this thesis

[28] This similarity is astounding, considering that Malinowski (1960) conducted his field work (1914-1918 with interruptions) on the *Kula*-ring in a geographical and social context fundamentally different from neo-colonial New Zealand (leading to his classic work *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*).

In this thesis I look at voyaging *waka* as a combination of technology and culture. The *waka* itself is, in a sense, the embodiment of the way these ingredients are combined. I argue that a combined approach, as represented in this thesis, is essential to understanding the underlying cultural motivations and the contemporary significance of these projects. The cultural aspects and the technological aspects of these voyaging *waka* are closely interwoven; one reflects the other.

From a purely practical point of view, the voyaging *waka* is simply a tool or a means to an end; historically used for the movement of resources between islands and island groups in the Pacific.[29] The most prominent Western approach to indigenous watercraft has been to see them as "an item of material culture". Yet any attempt to produce an in-depth understanding of the physical nature of an indigenous vessel needs to consider central environmental factors. These can be divided into two main categories: The environment the vessel is built *for*, and the environment the vessel is built *within*. Firstly, a canoe is designed to cope with specific local conditions on the water. For offshore travel the vessel's design has to match the local conditions of winds and currents, as well as the type of coast. (Likewise, canoes for inland voyaging are designed to meet the local conditions of rivers and lakes.) And secondly, the design of a canoe is dependent on the availability of tools and construction materials.

The last is perhaps the main difference between traditional vessels and their contemporary replicas: Today a much wider range of materials (artificial and imported natural materials) as well as modern technologies are available for the construction of a vessel. It has now become a matter of choice to build a canoe from 'traditional' (i.e. natural and mostly local) materials and with 'traditional' tools. This is an area of contention, and differing attitudes between one contemporary project and another soon become obvious, as exemplified by the two Māori projects represented in this thesis.

Secondly, the vessel is built for a specific purpose, which needs to be identified. In pre-European times and the early settler days, the Māori *waka* were the only available efficient means of transport for goods and people in and around Aotearoa New Zealand. Different types

[29] This included the transfer and/or exchange of human resources, as well as plants, animals, tools and other trade or settlement items.

of canoes were built for different functions, such as fishing, or transport of goods and people. Different designs were developed and regional variations occurred due to the specific conditions of the local waters and coasts they were going to be used within (e.g., river, lake, coastal or deep-sea voyaging). For example, the most prominent vessel of the Māori, the war canoe, was constructed for the purpose of transporting large war parties, the *taua*, from one tribal area to another.[30]

In this thesis, however, I am primarily interested in *the meanings the vessels I studied have to their indigenous participants*. How do these meanings relate to the Māori present, their past, and future? How is this voyaging revival related to the contemporary situation of Māori as an ethnic minority within a dominant Western settler society? How do contemporary voyaging projects reflect the concerns of Pacific Islanders?

1.5.1 Methodology for technical and practical sailing aspects

> Ethnography starts with a conscious attitude of almost complete ignorance.
>
> (Spradley 1979: 4)

As a European landlubber, my experience with the sea over the past two decades – including the Indian Ocean, the Pacific and the North Sea – has given me a degree of understanding of tides, waves, and coastal currents as well as a basic understanding of hydrodynamic principles. But despite my sailing experiences on *Te Aurere*, I still consider myself very much a layperson. Because of my own relative lack of knowledge and sailing experience – in comparison with seasoned sailors and experts - my understanding of technical aspects, as portrayed in various technical sections on *waka* in this thesis, relies on communications from experts. Furthermore, my interpretation of written sources has often resulted from discussions I had about the subject with sailing experts. When in doubt, I discussed my ideas with experienced contemporary sailors such as Harmen Hielkema, Jefferson Chapple and Hans-Dieter Bader. Each of them studied Pacific canoe designs and has personal experiences with building and sailing Pacific outrigger watercraft. I have also talked with Peter McCurdy, curator of the National Maritime Museum at the time, regarding the watercraft designs. All of these experts share a great (and sometimes professional) interest in traditional Pacific watercraft and have been a priceless

[30] For a more detailed discussion of the various types of Māori *waka* and their use, see 1.7 this thesis.

source of information since my participation at the *Waka Moana Symposium*.[31] Their competence (based on knowledge about and experience with various types of traditional and modern, ancient and contemporary, indigenous and Western sailing vessels) not only far outstrips my own, but all of these men - my "sailing informants" - have been in professional as well as personal contact with New Zealand's sailing icon and Pacific navigation and voyaging expert, David Lewis, over recent years. This contributes much to their authority as a source on the subject of sailing.

1.6 Key-words

1.6.1 'Canoe'

For Europeans the term 'canoe' has a patronising even derogatory quality when compared to the terminology applied to Western seafaring vessels such as 'boat' or 'ship'. According to the 1991 edition of *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *COED*) the Haitian term 'canoa' is the native forebear of the English term 'canoe' (*COED* 1991: s.v. "canoe").[32] Brought back to Europe by Columbus in the 16th century, 'canoa' was in use in England (and similar forms spread elsewhere in Europe) into the 18th century. Originally the term was only applied to vessels "hollowed out of a single tree-trunk", such as seen by Columbus in the West Indies (the so-called 'dug-outs'), but was soon extended to the "kind of *simple, keelless boat* . . . of other *primitive societies*, or of prehistoric cultures". Later, 'canoe' came to mean, "any *roughly made craft* used by American-Indians, Malayo-Polynesians, etc." (*COED* 1991: s.v. "canoe"; my emphasis).

In this section I argue that the term 'canoe', as defined in authoritative dictionaries such as *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, is not a suitable terminology to describe Pacific watercraft. This is by no means a new observation. In 1976 Elsdon Best, contemplating his use

[31] This symposium was held at the New Zealand National Maritime Museum Te Huiteananui-a-Tangaroa in Auckland, 18th – 24th March 1996.

[32] Elsewhere, the native Caribian term from which the European version 'canoe' derived, is stated as "*canaoa*" (Dodd 1972: 67), which is also mentioned (amongst other versions) in *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (*COED* 1991: s.v. "canoe").

of the English term 'canoe' for "the *waka maori* of New Zealand", made the following comment in his authoritative work on traditional Māori watercraft:

> This [definition of 'canoe' found in "Webster's"] describes a simple dugout, but does not embrace a vessel fitted with top-strakes, prow, and stern-pieces, &c., as were many Polynesian vessels, in which also the dugout hull was sometimes composed of two or three pieces. (Best 1976: 3)

As Best implied, Māori vessels are generally much more complex designs than simple dugouts (see Best 1976; cf. Nelson 1991)[33] and therefore, he concluded, "[t]he term 'canoe' . . . scarcely seems suitable."[34] (Best 1976: 3)

In the Pacific, the term 'canoe' has become utilised as something of a generic term, most generously applied by the English-speaking world to any type of non-Western watercraft. This application includes a wide variety of indigenous and/or prehistoric watercraft. Whether it is a so-called 'dugout',[35] lashed or sewn planked vessel; whether a monohull (single canoe), multi-hull (double canoe) or outrigger vessel (single or double outrigger canoe); whether it is sailed or paddled, 10 or 100 feet long; all these diverse craft have been referred to as 'canoe'. But, as Edward Dodd has aptly commented, the watercraft developed by Polynesians was "so diverse that it is superficial of us to call them all canoes" (Dodd 1972: 66).

There is an apparent contradiction between the definition of the term 'canoe' and its application in the Pacific. For example, *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* states that since "most of these [indigenous watercraft] use paddles", an understanding of 'canoe' as "any vessel propelled by paddles" is not uncommon (COED 1991: s.v. "canoe"). There is no mention of (and not even a reference to) the possibility of the use of windpower by "Malayo-Polynesians" (or other "primitive societies, or . . . prehistoric cultures") in order to propel their "roughly made craft" across an ocean as large as the Pacific. The general practice of referring to any kind of Pacific watercraft as 'canoe' in the English-speaking world *appears* to include sailing vessels

[33] See 1.7.3 this thesis about the use of 'dugout' in respect to Māori watercraft.
[34] Nevertheless, despite his correct observation about the inadequacy of 'canoe' in much of the Pacific context, Best decided to retain the term 'canoe' throughout his work (and even featured it in a most prominent position, his title "The Maori Canoe"), "for want of a better one" (Best 1976: 3).
[35] About the controversial nature of this term, see 1.7.3 this thesis

(such as prehistoric Polynesian voyaging vessels), while the authoritative definition of 'canoe' implies the exclusion of any watercraft more sophisticated than the simple dugout.[36]

In the technical section of "the most comprehensive survey of its kind" (Force 1975: v) on the "Canoes of Oceania", the authors Alfred Cort Haddon and James Hornell distinguished five different types of canoe[37], but unfortunately none of their three monumental volumes offered a definition of the term 'canoe' itself (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 5-12), nor addressed the problem of extending the definition of 'canoe' to include sailing vessels. Finally, more than half a century after Haddon and Hornell's classic work published in 1936/1938, another expert on Pacific voyaging, David Lewis (who has focused his research on non-instrumental navigation techniques in the Pacific), questions the use of 'canoe' in a Pacific voyaging context:

> The word "canoe" is rather misleading in the present context [of voyaging canoes], conjuring up as it does a picture of some tiny craft hollowed out from a tree trunk. The vessels with which we are here concerned and which have, in the main, long since vanished from Pacific seaways, deserve the appellation "ship," rather than "canoe." As an indication of their size, some were longer than Cook's *Endeavour*. (Lewis 1994: 53)

A proper acknowledgement of these Pacific watercraft in the English language would either entail an appropriate updating of authoritative definitions of 'canoe' in contemporary dictionaries (by extending its meaning?), or the substitution of this so obviously problematic terminology with a more appropriate term, such as 'boat' or 'ship'. But only a few contemporary English-speaking authors, such as David Lewis (1994) and James Wharram (1998), have suggested the use of other terms such as 'boat' or 'ship' in order to replace 'canoe'.

In contrast, the German language has adapted the term 'Boot' (the equivalent to the English 'boat'[38]) to describe the smaller and larger indigenous vessels in the Pacific (Kelm 1989: 52-57). Furthermore, in her recent German ethnological publication on worldwide watercraft, Antje

[36] In *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (1991: s.v. "canoe") sailing vessels are not explicitly, but implicitly excluded (unless they are meant to be included under the category of "roughly made craft").
[37] These canoe types are "Dugout canoe", "Five-part canoe", "Built-up canoe", "Outrigger canoe" and "Double Canoe" (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 5).
[38] *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (1991: s.v. "boat") defines 'boat' as "[a] small open vessel in which to traverse the surface of water, usually propelled by oars, though sometimes by a sail." Furthermore 'boat' has been "[e]xtended to various vessels either smaller than, or in some way differing from, a 'ship'; esp. small sailing vessels employed in fishing, or in carrying mails and packets, and small steamers. (Sometimes applied to large ocean steamers, though these are more properly 'steam ships'.)"

Kelm suggests, much like David Lewis, that the large double-hulled sailing vessels of the Polynesians actually deserve to be called 'Schiff' (the equivalent to the English 'ship'[39]):

> The scope of boats utilised by Polynesians and Micronesians reaches from the small outrigger paddling boat to the big double-hulled voyaging boat. Strictly speaking the latter is correctly referred to as a ship. (Kelm 1989: 53; author's translation[40])

Perhaps the problem lies less in the definition of 'canoe' (which simply reflects its origin), but in the way the English-speaking world simplistically applies this term to denote *all* types of indigenous Pacific vessels, no matter how distinctively different they may be from the so-called 'dug-out' and no matter how sophisticated their designs. From the time of first European contact until today, the term 'canoe', applicable to a simple dugout more than anything else, has been utilised to describe Pacific watercraft in general. As Douglas Oliver (1989: 367f.) writes, referring to the definition of 'canoe' in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*:

> While bowing respectfully to OED's omniscience in most other matters, it can be observed that some of those "rudely constructed" boats made and used by some of the "uncivilized nations" of Island Oceania were capable of transporting scores of people for hundreds of miles in desired directions. One of those tested by present-day naval architect Edwin Doran was judged to be ". . . superior to a modern boat (i.e., a modern racing trimaran of comparable size) on significant points of sailing"- for example, maximum speed, speed downwind, and maximum progress against the wind.

The term 'canoe' implies a technical inferiority on the part of Pacific vessels when compared to Western watercraft. Therefore one must conclude that 'canoe' is a misnomer for Pacific watercraft. But perhaps the obvious lack of a more appropriate terminology merely reflects the prevailing lack of understanding, and hence lack of appreciation, of so many of these unique designs within the Western world. Expert multihull designer and sailor James Wharram (1998: 1) notes "a disappointing lack of knowledge of the world's sailing craft [ancient and traditional designs]" among contemporary yachtsmen. According to Wharram,

> The development of modern catamarans and trimarans is an important pointer to the vast treasure house of design knowledge, experience and ideas that exist not on the screen of

[39] According to *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (1991: s.v. "ship") a 'ship' is "[a] large sea-going vessel (opposed to a boat), spec. (in modern times) a vessel having a bowsprit and three masts, each of which consists of a lower, top , and topgallant mast." But in Old English 'ship' is "used also for a small craft as ON. [Old Norse] skip."

[40] The German original I am referring to reads as follows:

> Die Spannbreite der von Polynesiern und Mikronesiern verwendeten Boote reicht vom kleinen Ausleger-Paddelboot bis hin zum grossen Doppelrumpf-Reiseboot, das eigentlich schon als Schiff bezeichnet werden muss. (Kelm 1989: 53)

> a computer, but in the traditional small craft still sailing and found in ship museums or books of historic sailing craft. (Wharram 1998: 9-10)

This same author has brought the only alternative Western definition of which I am currently aware forward. Wharram (1998: 1) describes ancient Pacific designs in modern technical terms as "fast, light displacement Canoeform Craft" or "the Canoeform light displacement sailing ship".

1.6.2 '*Waka*'

The generic Pacific term for 'canoe' appears to be *waka*. Regional variations throughout the Pacific include *vaka* (e.g., Cook Islands), *va'a* (e.g., Fiji), *wa* or *wa'a* (e.g., Marshall Islands). Depending on the specific function or particular style of the *waka*, a specification is common: to take the New Zealand Māori example, there is a *waka ama* ('*ama*' is the generic Pacific term for outrigger float,[41] hence *waka ama* describes an 'outrigger canoe'), or *waka taua* ('*taua*' is the Māori term for a war-party, hence *waka taua* depicts a 'war canoe') amongst many others (see Best 1976). And this is where any affinity between 'canoe' and '*waka*' has to end. Other Polynesian regions have their own nomenclature for specialised vessels, such as the *tongiaki*,[42] the large Tongan double canoe, or the *pahi tere*,[43] the large Hawaiian double canoe.

The Māori term '*waka*' is by no means restricted to watercraft only. Williams' *Dictionary of the Maori Language* offers a total of six different meanings. Besides "*[c]anoe*", the only other human creation referred to as *waka* is "[a]ny *long narrow receptacle*, as *trough* for water, *box* for feathers, etc." (Williams 1992: s.v. "waka") such as the *waka huia*.[44] In a supernatural

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[41] In his glossary Best (1976: 296) translated '*ama*' as 'outrigger', but more accurately the *ama* only depicts the float, which is part of the composite structure Westerners refer to as 'outrigger' (see 3.2.2 this thesis). As Sir Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa) remarked:

> The Polynesians were more exact in the use of technical terms than we are in English and as the outrigger was never an entity in their technique, they had no need for a general term to describe the outrigger as a whole. (Buck 1949: 199)

[42] According to Edward Dodd, the *tongiaki* were the largest known double canoes by the time of European arrival. "They [*tongiaki*] and the closely related Fijian vessels measured as much as 100 feet and were capable of carrying a couple of hundred persons." (Dodd 1972: 73)

[43] A probable descendant of the voyaging canoe, the *pahi tere* were used (paddled or sailed) for interisland voyaging as observed by Cook. (Dodd 1972: 71)

[44] *Waka huia* are commonly translated as treasure boxes, "notably of varied style, ingenious in form and design, and typically of fine craftsmanship. . . . [T]hey were commonly of portable size and elaborately carved" (Barrow 1969: 153). According to Barrow (1969: 153) the term '*huia*', referring to "the prized black-and-white tail feathers of the [bird] 'huia' . . . may mean 'anything much prized'". He (Barrow 1969: 153) continues that

context *waka* can refer to a "*[m]edium* of an atua" (Williams 1992: s.v. "waka"; cf. Best 1976: 3). And lastly, *waka* can depict a group-context of some sort; such as the "*[c]rew* of a canoe, a "*[t]ribe*", or the "*[f]light, flock*, of birds" (Williams 1992: s.v. "waka"). Best, when considering possible alternatives to the term 'canoe', stated that "[i]t is scarcely advisable to employ the native term of waka" (Best 1976: 3), but unfortunately fails to offer any specific reason for his rejection of '*waka*'.[45]

In the broadest sense, '*waka*' is applied to a carved receptacle or vessel (or a group of beings) which is associated with a journey, or transfer of some precious content. This element of motion, a journey or transfer of some sort, appears to be the principal meaning of '*waka*' and can be within the material world or between the spiritual and material world. This interpretation of '*waka*' is confirmed by the fact that formerly unknown forms of transport have become embraced by the generic term '*waka*' in post-European times. For example, Best (1976: 4) quoted an "old native" who referred to a "buggy" as a "*waka pakeha* (European canoe)." This meaning of *waka* as a means of conveyance has survived into modern times. In the contemporary context the term '*waka*' is used by some of my Māori informants to depict any form of humanmade transport on the water, on land or in the air. To take an example from my field research, my Tūhoe informant Pat Aramoana, a crewmember on *Te Aurere*, sometimes jokingly refers to his car as a "*waka pākehā*". Furthermore, the 1995 edition of *The Reed Dictionary of Modern Māori* offers a variety of post-European examples: e.g., *waka kawerangi* (space shuttle), *waka pūangi* (airship), *waka rerehau* (glider), *waka mania hau* (hovercraft), *waka kōpikipiko* (ferry), *waka noho* (caravan), etc (Ryan 1995: s.v. "waka").

1.6.3 Contemporary usage of 'canoe' and '*waka*'

From my observations of the current Māori revival of traditional boat forms in Aotearoa New Zealand, the indigenous participants, if not using the Māori term '*waka*', often refer to the vessel concerned (this can be a *waka taua, waka ama* or *waka hourua*), as 'the canoe' or 'our

it seems certain that jade ornaments, combs, small chisels, and other small tapu possessions ranked equal with or above feathers ornaments as personal possessions. Any precious object including small weapons might be placed in 'waka huia'.

[45] Perhaps it is the generic nature of the term '*waka*', incorporating meanings other than watercraft, which caused Best to reject "the native term" (Best 1976: 3).

canoe'.[46] Another Polynesian example from Hawai'i is the use of 'canoe' by Nainoa Thompson, the first modern Hawaiian navigator employing traditional navigation methods. During a presentation at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in February 1998, Thompson utilised 'canoe' anytime he referred to indigenous Hawaiian vessels, for example:

> [T]he largest recorded canoe in Hawai'i was on the island of Kauai, by Captain Vancouver, and he measured the canoe - 108 feet long - in *your* standard [addressing his Māori audience] that's not long, but for us that's huge! ... [T]he canoe is made of white pine, driftwood log; it was second source. (Thompson 1998)

Furthermore, Thompson constantly interchanged the name of the contemporary Hawaiian replicas (in this case *Hawai'iloa*) and the word 'canoe':

> Now we've got these trees - how do we build a canoe, we haven't done this for 600 years. We got our master canoe builder to do it . . . he got his friends together, friends got friends, friends build community - and we started to construct this canoe out of traditional material. And in the end, in the end we felt sure about that hope to build a canoe out of traditional materials. People . . . think about . . . the totality of the whole project. And in the end, what it did was, it built the strongest sense of community around something special. (Thompson 1998)

In both the Hawaiian and the Māori context, the indigenous participants use the word 'canoe' in a very affectionate manner. This reflects two things. Firstly the personal relationship they have to the vessel concerned. The canoe is treated with respect, as "a living thing, possessing its own individuality". Malinowski (1960: 105) considered this to be "the most vital reality of a native canoe".[47] Secondly, I argue that there is a 'Pacific meaning'[48] of 'canoe', which incorporates at least some of the connotations inherent in '*waka*' and the historical *waka*-concept. In the cases I witnessed, the indigenous participants of contemporary *waka*-projects appear to utilise the term 'canoe' in the sense of a literal translation of '*waka*' into the English language .

Nevertheless, the simplistic English use of the term 'canoe', with its derogatory air, creates an uncomfortable situation for any contemporary researcher of Pacific watercraft who is using the

[46] This is based on my observations in the context of the *Te Aurere* project between 1996 and 1998 and during numerous informal conversations with Māori informants concerning *waka ama, waka taua* and/or *waka hourua* between 1996 and 2000.

[47] See 1.5 this thesis.

[48] This is not to simplify the fact that there is a large body of meanings of a social, metaphysical, and political nature attached to '*waka*', including Pacific-wide regional differences. Some of these meanings of *waka* will be shown in the course of this thesis (see, for example, 2.8, 3.3, 3.4 this thesis). In the contemporary context,

English language. A rejection of 'canoe' creates an urgent need for alternatives. What is an appropriate English term to describe these vessels? Should one apply Western terminology, such as 'boat' and 'ship'? Should one construct new terminology, such as exemplified by Wharram (1998)? Should one adapt the indigenous terminology instead? But afterall, can one reject 'canoe', a terminology not only used over centuries, but also applied by authorities such as Haddon and Hornell, and not least a translation used by indigenous peoples themselves?

This difficulty sometimes prompts researchers to use the native name of the craft as a means of avoiding 'canoe' and its derogatory notions. For example, my own observations at the New Zealand National Maritime Museum between March 1996 and August 1998 showed that to an inquisitive sailor and/or Pacific expert, the native word denoting the type or name of the vessel can become a synonym for its characteristic features, which are far too distinctive and sophisticated for the word 'canoe' to be considered an acceptable alternative. This is based on my observations during countless personal communications with Dr Hans-Dieter Bader (archaeologist at Auckland University), Peter McCurdy (curator of the National Maritime Museum at the time), Jefferson Chapple and Harmen Hielkema (both accomplished sailors and builders of small replicas of Pacific sailing craft, who worked as volunteers and part-time employees at the National Maritime Museum on various occasions). Without exception, all of these informants referred to the *Waan Aelon Kein*, an extraordinary outrigger voyaging canoe from Enewetak Atoll (Marshall Islands) present at the museum at the time, as either 'the *proa*' (this particular type of *waka* is often referred to as 'flying *proa*', due to its incredible speed), [49] or 'the *Walap*' (the Marshall Islands' term for a large voyaging canoe; Alessio and Weisler 1995: 54). The term 'canoe' was not completely avoided but used as an exception. Unfortunately, the native name may not mean anything to the layperson (yet). In the context of Polynesian double-hulled voyaging vessels, these same informants mostly apply the word 'canoe', if not using the name of the vessel, such as *Te Aurere*.

voyaging waka are clearly utilised as a cultural tool, which re-connect indigenous peoples in the Pacific Islands (see 2.8.1 and 6.2 this thesis).

[49] In 1992 the *Waan Aelon Kein* sailed the 250 km distance from Aitutaki to Rarotonga (Cook Islands) "in less than 30 hours", reportedly reaching "speeds of 10 knots as it dipped and rose in six to eight-foot swells" (McCarthy 1992b: 50). The crossing was part of the seafaring theme of the Pacific Arts Festival in October 1992 (see 6.3.1 this thesis for details on this Festival).

In this thesis I wish to advocate the use of the appropriate indigenous terminology. Nevertheless, I have also decided to adopt 'canoe' as an interchangeable term to '*waka*' in this thesis, in the same sense that it is utilised in the contemporary Māori and Hawaiian contexts I experienced. However, the eurocentric definition of 'canoe' with its derogatory and unspecific air, as found in authoritative dictionaries, needs to be rejected in the context of this thesis. I hope that such terms will be either revised by leading authorities in the near future, or that more appropriate terms (such as 'boat' and 'ship'), or the more specific indigenous terminology, will be commonly employed to describe these ingeniously constructed Pacific vessels in future.

1.7 A Historical Perspective on Māori *Waka*

Though my thesis is primarily concerned with the *contemporary* cultural context of voyaging, I believe that it is important to include the following discussion about some structural particulars of traditional Māori *waka*, as recorded from the time of first European contacts. By adding a brief historical perspective on the characteristic structure of Māori *waka* and by drawing some comparisons to types of watercraft used in other Pacific areas, the wider cultural significance of the contemporary Māori voyaging projects discussed in this thesis will become clearer.

1.7.1 Māori *waka* at the point of European contact

> At the time when the Maoris made contact with Europeans they were using double and single canoes and single outriggers. The outriggers appear to have been already rare and on the point of disappearance at that time and the double canoes followed them into oblivion in the early decades of the 19th century. (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 194)

Firstly, it is interesting to note that the single hull was the dominant type of Māori *waka*, locally outliving any other type of traditional watercraft, such as the outrigger and double canoes. Furthermore, from a Polynesian perspective, the single hull was a unique local development, as it only occurred in Aotearoa New Zealand in pre-European times. In post-European times, it was also built in Samoa (Buck 1949: 202); as Buck (1949: 202f.) asserted, "[t]he Māori single canoe, unlike the Samoan, was a purely native development". The single hull is the only type of Māori *waka* that survived in the long run, bridging pre- and post-European times in Aotearoa New Zealand. As Buck (1949: 202) put it, "[t]he relics of Polynesian canoe architecture thus lingered on until towards the end of the 18th century and then were completely replaced by the single hull."

In pre-European times and the early settler days, the Māori *waka* were the only efficient means of transport available for goods and people in and around Aotearoa. Different types of canoes were built for different functions, such as fishing or the transport of goods and people. Different designs were developed and regional variations occurred depending on the conditions of the waters (and immediate surroundings, such as the coast) they were going to be used within (such as river, lake, coastal and/or deep-sea voyaging).

In respect to Māori single canoes, Haddon and Hornell (1975: 200) distinguished "three main classes: 1. war canoes; 2. fishing and travelling canoes; 3. harbour and river dugouts." Examples have been recorded of Māori converting their fishing canoes into war canoes for occasions, such as "special pageants" (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 200). Best (1976 – *check pages and if the following contains quotes*) made a similar distinction according to the size and function of these different types of Māori single canoes. First, there was the *waka tiwai*, the classic dugout used on rivers and lakes. A second form was the *waka tete* which were sea going canoes of up to 46 feet in length. With *rauawa* (gunwale strakes) attached to the upper edge of a dugout hull to increase freeboard, these *waka* were used for fishing or coastal journeys. A third form was the Māori *waka taua*, outstanding "not only in size but in the elaborate carving lavished upon the various parts" (Buck 1949: 204). Edward Dodd (1972: 73) remarked about *waka taua* that, "although they were not long-distance, deep-sea vessels, yet their great size and intricate construction are a valuable attestation of the shipbuilder's art". Māori single hull *waka*, such as *waka taua*, *waka tete*, and *waka tiwai*, survived into the 20th century. But, as Anne Nelson (1991: 49) reported,

> By the mid 20th century only a few treasured waka taua remained, most of them in museums. Waka tete were also rare and waka tiwai, while still in use in some areas (for example, on the Waikato, Wanganui and Mokau Rivers and Lake Rotorua) were few in number.

1.7.2 A note on 'double canoes'

> Without the transport facilities afforded by the employment of double canoes, Polynesian migration and settlement could never have attained the dimensions which they did, as evidenced by the widespread distribution of this people from Hawaii in the North to New Zealand in the south, from the outposts scattered on the fringe of Melanesia on the west to far-away Easter Island on the east.
> (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 3)

According to David Lewis, a term for 'double canoe' first appeared "1200-1500BC in the Eastern Solomon Islands languages and further eastward", which is "roughly where it [the double canoe] dates from" (Lewis cited in *PWMS 1996*: 15). The terms used by Māori for double canoes include *waka hourua* and *waka taurua*.[50] Variations are found in other parts of Polynesia. For example, Haddon and Hornell recorded *wa'a kaulua* as the Hawaiian term for double canoe (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 26), and *vaa houua* and *vaka touua* are equivalent terms used in the Marquesas (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 49).

Long-distance voyaging had declined in the Pacific by the time Cook and his contemporaries explored the region. David Lewis (cited in *PWMS 1996*: 29f.) explains,

> The reason there's a gap in our knowledge [about 'double canoes'], is that once people sailed to Aotearoa or even Hawaii or the larger islands, to Samoa, Tonga and French Polynesia, a land-based civilisation didn't necessarily demand long-distance voyaging. But it did continue, especially in the smaller islands that required trade and trade goods and so on, and we have [archaeological] evidence now of a lot more voyaging than people thought there was. . . . [T]ese contacts over very difficult windward passages were continued and that's where the double canoe shone and was essential.

Though double-hulled *waka* were reportedly "in common use" around Aotearoa New Zealand's coastline at the time of Tasman's visit in 1642 (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 195), they do not appear to have been of the type used for long-distance voyaging. About a century and a half after Tasman, Cook reported "numerous" double-hulled *waka* in the South Island, but in the "North Island double canoes had become rare" (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 195). Numbers further declined after European settlement and the introduction of Western boat technology. For example, in the rougher southern seas the "versatile" and "remarkably seaworthy" whale boats eventually replaced the locally used Māori *waka* (such as the double-hull) as many Māori obtained these whaling boats from the 1820s onwards (Nelson 1991: 49). The latest examples of double canoes were recorded along the shores of the South Island in places such as Otago and the West Coast, until they completely disappeared within the first half of the 20th century (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 197).

[50] For further variations recorded by Best (1976) see 1.7.2.1 this thesis.

1.7.2.1 *Temporary and permanent double-hulled Māori waka*

Elsdon Best (1976: 6) distinguished two types of Māori double canoes: the permanent type and the temporary type. The temporary type, *waka taurua* (a term which was apparently in use around the East Coast and the Bay of Plenty region [Best 1976: 14]), served a specific short-term purpose, such as a coastal voyage, a fishing excursion or "other purposes such as the raising of sunken logs" (Best 1976: 6). Best (1976: 13), for example, recorded an incident of Māori lashing together two *waka taua* to create a *waka taurua* in order to manipulate "large seines" in 1873 (Best 1976: 14). An account from the South Island described double-canoes used for ocean voyaging in times of conflict during the early part of the 19th century. These were made up "by lashing two ordinary war-canoes together, and further strengthening them with a deck" (quoted from *Stories of Banks Peninsula* cited in Best 1976: 11). As Best (1976: 14) remarked, "[s]uch temporary joinings of two canoes for a special purpose differ from the permanent double canoe of Polynesia, but show that a knowledge of the usage has been preserved, and utilized to a late date." Māori terms could differ when applied to the permanent form of double canoes where the hulls were securely lashed one to three feet apart from each other via crossbeams (Best 1976: 6). Examples given by Best (1976: 13) are *waka unua* and *huhunu* but unfortunately he failed to specify any details in respect to the regional origin of these terms, nor does he offer an explanation as to a possible difference in their structure.

Another term used by Best for two canoes joined side by side is *waka hourua*. When separated only by a short interval they were called *mahanga* (Best 1895: 11; Haddon and Hornell 1975: 195), which is the Māori expression for 'twins'. This distinction is based on a Ngā Puhi informant of Best's, who described two types of double canoes for his area. The *waka hourua* were two canoes closely fitted together and equipped with top-strakes.[51] The *mahanga* in this case was two canoes lashed together in a distance of only about 30 inches apart. (Best 1976: 10f.) It is no coincidence that the contemporary voyaging *waka* project *Te Aurere* adopted *waka hourua* as the native term describing this vessel, as it is based in the area of Tai Tokerau (which includes Ngā Puhi among local *iwi*).

[51] The only example of a *waka hourua* seen by Best's Ngā Puhi informant H. M. Stowell in his youth was 10 to 12 feet wide (distance between the two hulls).

1.7.2.2 *Ornamentation of double canoes*

In respect to the ornamentation of Māori double canoes, Haddon and Hornell (1975: 197) commented,

> Double canoes intended for war or the use of the chief had hulls similar to the highly ornamented single war canoes; the rest, intended to subserve more or less utilitarian purposes, showed every gradation from the war type down to workaday fishing canoes, poorly finished and almost destitute of ornament. Many canoes were constructed or used doubly, but others were normally employed as single canoes and only converted into double ones to meet a passing need or emergency.

1.7.3 The so-called 'dugout'

Māori *waka*, as encountered since European contact, have become classified as "the dugout type" in the sense that their canoe hulls were commonly made from one or more "dugout underbodies" (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 213). The fact that traditional Māori *waka* are of the so-called "dugout-type" is a fundamental point. As with the term 'canoe', 'dugout' has to be seen as controversial because of its derogatory air. Māori carver and traditional boat-building expert, Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell, was clear about his rejection of the term 'dugout', when he exclaimed:

> I wish the European writers would stop calling our canoes 'dug-outs', because they are not! The keel, the hull itself, is the piece that's the backbone of the canoe. It's not a 'dug-out'. I don't like that being used. The Maori word is *puna* – backbone, keel. (*PWMS 1996*: 99; brackets omitted by author)

Crafting a canoe-hull from a single tree is a much more elaborate process than the term 'dugout' may imply, in the obvious sense of "hollowed out by digging" (COED 1991, s.v. "dug-out"). Selecting the right trees and shaping the hulls of a Māori double-hulled voyaging canoe, for example, requires not only experience accumulated over many generations, but relies heavily for its success on the sophisticated technical knowledge and intricate craftsmanship of its builders (master-carvers). The detailed descriptions of the construction of *Hawaiki Nui* and *Te Aurere* in this thesis will confirm this point.

Perhaps the, most striking feature of the Polynesian watercraft developed by Māori, was their construction of the largest single "dugout type" canoes known Pacific-wide, the *waka taua*.[52] According to Haddon and Hornell (1975: 200) the average size of *waka taua* was between 60 and 70 feet, but some exceeded 100 feet in length (see Dodd 1972: 70). When they had several hull sections, which was not uncommon with *waka taua*, these were often joined together by an ingenious method known as *haumi kokomo*, the "mortise-and-tenon joint", which is a construction technique only encountered in the westernmost corner of the Pacific and the Marquesas Islands (Buck 1949: 204; Haddon and Hornell 1975: 201, 213; Best 1976:p?).[53] As Buck (1949: 204) remarked, "[t]his was a great advance on the straight butt joint (*haumi tuporo*) which prevailed throughout Polynesia".

Plank-built vessels, such as the *pahi* type known from Central Polynesia, were absent in New Zealand, at least by the time of Cook and his contemporaries. This (in combination with the development of *waka taua*) was the most striking feature of traditional watercraft encountered in Aotearoa New Zealand as compared to counterparts from elsewhere in Polynesia. From an overall Pacific perspective, as summarised by Buck (1949: 208), "[t]he main local [Māori] developments were the single hull without outrigger, the mortice and tenon join of the bow and stern sections of the hull, and the elaboration in decoration due to the high development of schools of carving."

1.7.3.1 *'Dugout' versus plank-built vessels*

Haddon and Hornell have noted "[t]he absence of any tradition or even suggestion of the former use in New Zealand of plank-built vessels" (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 213). This raises some important questions: Are prehistoric Māori the only Polynesians who were ignorant of and never developed the technique of planking in the construction of their watercraft? If not, could there have possibly been reasons why Māori favoured the so-called "dugout-type" so much that it caused the total abandonment of the plank-built types employed by Polynesians elsewhere?

[52] In other parts of Polynesia, such as Tonga, canoes of a comparable length to the Māori *waka taua* also running up to a length of 100 feet, such as the Tongan double-hull *tongiaki*, were constructed from planks instead.

[53] Haddon and Hornell (1975: 210; 213) have stressed the striking similarities between the Māori *waka taua* and the traditional watercraft of the Marquesas Islands.

Any attempt to answer this question needs to determine the principal characteristics of 'dugouts' and then to compare them to those of plank-built vessels. From a historic perspective, to cite a contemporary expert boat-builder, James Wharram, the so-called 'dugout'

> was a natural progress from the bark canoe and is often wrongly seen as the crudest form of boat built. A natural 'tree' log is an ideal structural material that can be subtly shaped and is free from leaking (unless you find a bad log). (Wharram 1998: 3)

No matter how strong and durable the end-products of sophisticated plank joining, even in the modern days (with the availability of extra-strong and durable adhesives, such as the epoxy resin) there is always the danger of leakage. This property of a plank-built vessel poses a major disadvantage when compared to the 'dugout-type' (provided that the utilised log is suitable for canoe-building of course). For example, the aim of the modern method of 'Strip Planking' (i.e., "glueing hundreds of strips of wood together") is, according to Wharram (1998: 3): "to get the quality of wood construction inherent in developed carved dugout hulls." By contrast to plank-built vessels, the "[d]ugout hulls have the rigidity to crash land on a beach and be hauled out" (Wharram 1998: 3). Considering the comparatively rough conditions of the oceans surrounding the islands of Aotearoa New Zealand (as opposed to Central Polynesia), the dugout hulls quite likely constituted a better adaptation to the southern latitudes.

Haddon and Hornell attempted to explain the striking overall absence of Māori plank-built vessels by suggesting "that the ancestors of the Māori left the Society Islands before the introduction there of the [planked] *pahi* type" (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 213).[54] Personally I opt for a simple, but nevertheless gripping, explanation, suggesting a reversion to the 'dugout-type' due to the great abundance of timber in Aotearoa New Zealand. As Haddon and Hornell (1975: 213) pointed out themselves, "[i]nstances are on record of reversion to the dugout type on the part of people previously using plank-built canoes when large enough timber became available (Napuka and Makemo in the Tuamotus)."[55]

[54] Unfortunately I have to disappoint my reader(s), who might expect me to engage in a discussion about prehistoric voyaging, times of settlement and the possible distribution of vessel types at different prehistoric times in the Pacific. Such a discussion would exceed the scope of this master's thesis in both length and depth. Therefore this complex task has to be left for a future time.

[55] In the light of the obvious disadvantage of plank-built hulls, the question arises why this type of vessel was predominant Pacific-wide? A possible answer could be that whenever or whereever prehistoric Polynesians encountered a lack of suitably sized trees, the need for other boat-building methods, such as lashing or sewing planks of wood tightly together (and caulking, to fill the inevitable gaps), arose. (pers. comm. Bader; pers. comm. Hicks; pers. comm. Hielkema)

The same authors acknowledged in another context that, "the presence of timber of great girth in the virgin forests that covered much of the land" (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 200) in Aotearoa New Zealand had a major influence on the structure of distinct Māori watercraft, such as the development of the distinctive single-hull war canoes. The "great girth" of the available timber allowed for equally great beams, providing sufficient stability and hence the outrigger may have become redundant (cf. Buck 1948: 202f.). In other parts of Polynesia the carrying capacity of Māori single hull vessels (again due to the width of their beams) could only be attained by constructing platforms onto an outrigger or a double canoe. The significance of the timber resource available to Māori was such that, combined with "the concurrent decline of overseas voyaging", it eventually made "artificial stabilizing devices" such as "the connection of two hulls or the use of counterpoise float" redundant in Māori watercraft (Haddon and Hornell 1975: 200).

In conclusion, historical evidence (as well as Pacific sailing-experts' common sense) point in the same direction, suggesting that rather than indicating an inferior boat-building technology, the use of 'the dugout-type' (instead of the plank-built type) by Māori craftsmen was simply a sign of the fortunate abundance of suitable trees in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1.7.3.2 *Shortage of suitable trees*

The shortage of trees suitable for canoe building has not only been a problem in much of Central Polynesia in prehistoric times (hence the development of the sewn boat),[56] but also appears to be a central problem within the contemporary revival of voyaging, especially in places other than Aotearoa. For example, trees had to be imported from Alaska for the construction of *Hawai'iloa* in Hawai'i, a voyaging canoe project aiming to use traditional materials and methods (pers. comm. Nainoa Thompson). And, of course, a large percentage of contemporary voyaging projects used fibreglass (the most prominent example of which is *Hōkūle'a)* or plywood (such as used for *Te Au o Tonga* and *Takitumu* from the Cook Islands; pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell) to construct replicas of their traditional *waka*. The desperate efforts by some of these contemporary projects to find suitable (and affordable)

[56] The technique of joining planks together with lashing and caulking had been in use when Cook and others arrived at the end of the 18th century. The most remarkable skills in respect to sewn/plank-built vessels Pacific-wide had perhaps been developed in the Tuamotu archipelago. The Tuamotuan boat-building experts had

materials is well illustrated by the following two examples. The builders of the Marhallese *Waan Aelon Kein*, a *walap* (large voyaging canoe) from Enewetak Atoll, "used driftwood logs for the hull and old Douglas fir telephone poles for the mast and sail booms" due to the lack of "large timber on the islands" (McCarthy 1992b: 50). When *Hawaiki Nui*'s crew needed to replace the vessel's broken mast in Rarotonga (during a stop-over on her voyage, see 2.7.3.3 this thesis), it took the intervention of Sir Tom Davis (the then Cook Island Prime Minister) to persuade the owner of the "one suitable bamboo in the whole of Rarotonga" to part with it (Evans 1998: 112) for the sake of a new mast.

Hence I argue that the construction of the hulls of both contemporary Māori voyaging *waka*, *Hawaiki Nui* and *Te Aurere*, from native trees (of "great girth", such as *tōtara* in the case of *Hawaiki Nui* and *kauri* in the case of *Te Aurere*) reinforces a characteristic and traditional feature of Māori *waka*. The following account therefore focuses on the overall process of selecting and felling the appropriate trees and the step by step construction process from the raw stage of the logs into the shaped hulls. I also concentrate on cultural aspects of the Māori voyaging revival, since in the traditional Māori world, the taking of the trees is connected to a whole complex of rituals. Because *waka* construction is intimately bound up with ritual I have felt it necessary to offer detailed descriptions of the construction *as well as* the associated cultural context surrounding the making and voyaging of these Māori voyaging *waka*.

mastered this technique to such an advanced level, that other island groups, such as Tahiti, imported their expertise for local projects. (cf. Haddon and Hornell 1975)

Part One

Polynesians realise that no culture can exist without its objects. The objects and their use are the cement that hold cultures together. . . . An artefact shaped by man has turned around and shaped man.

Herb Kawainui Kane

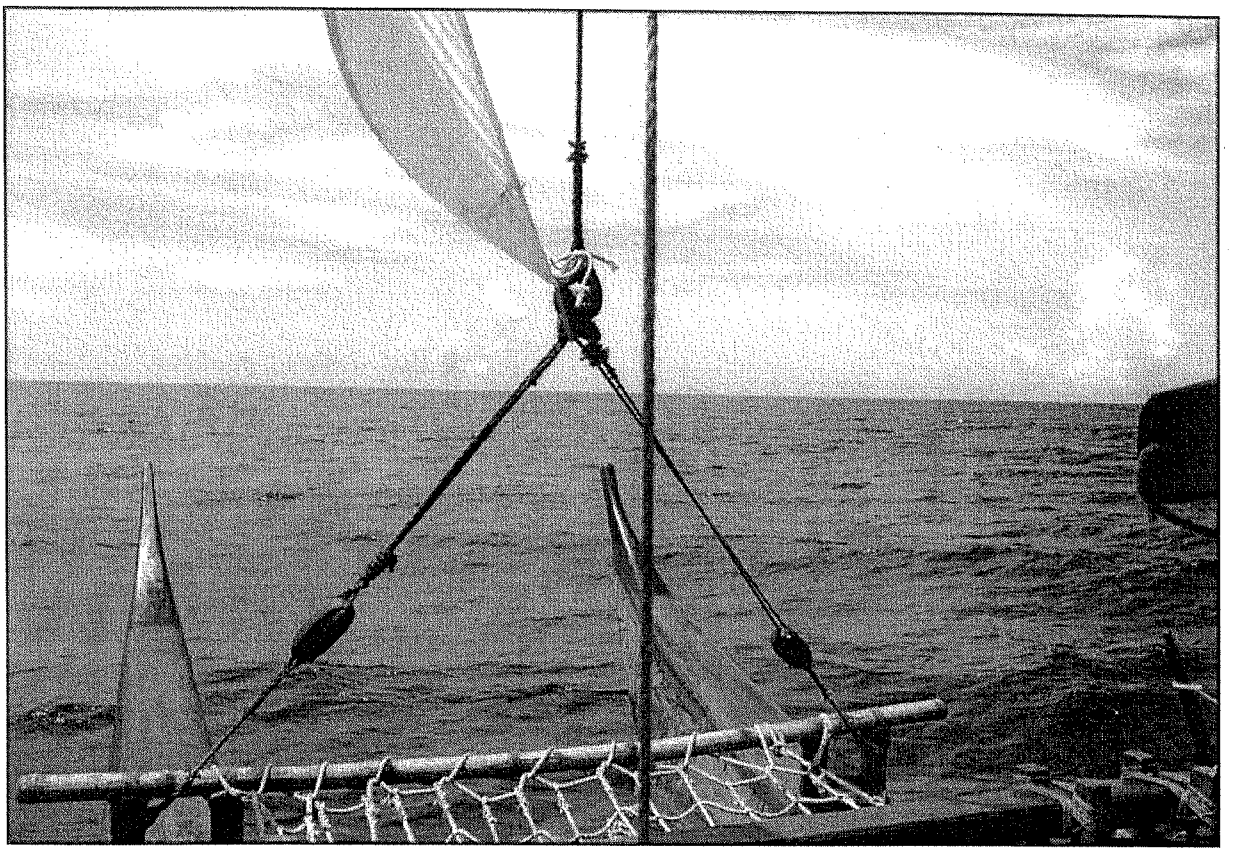

Fig. 2.1. *Hawaiki Nui at sea trials off Moorea. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

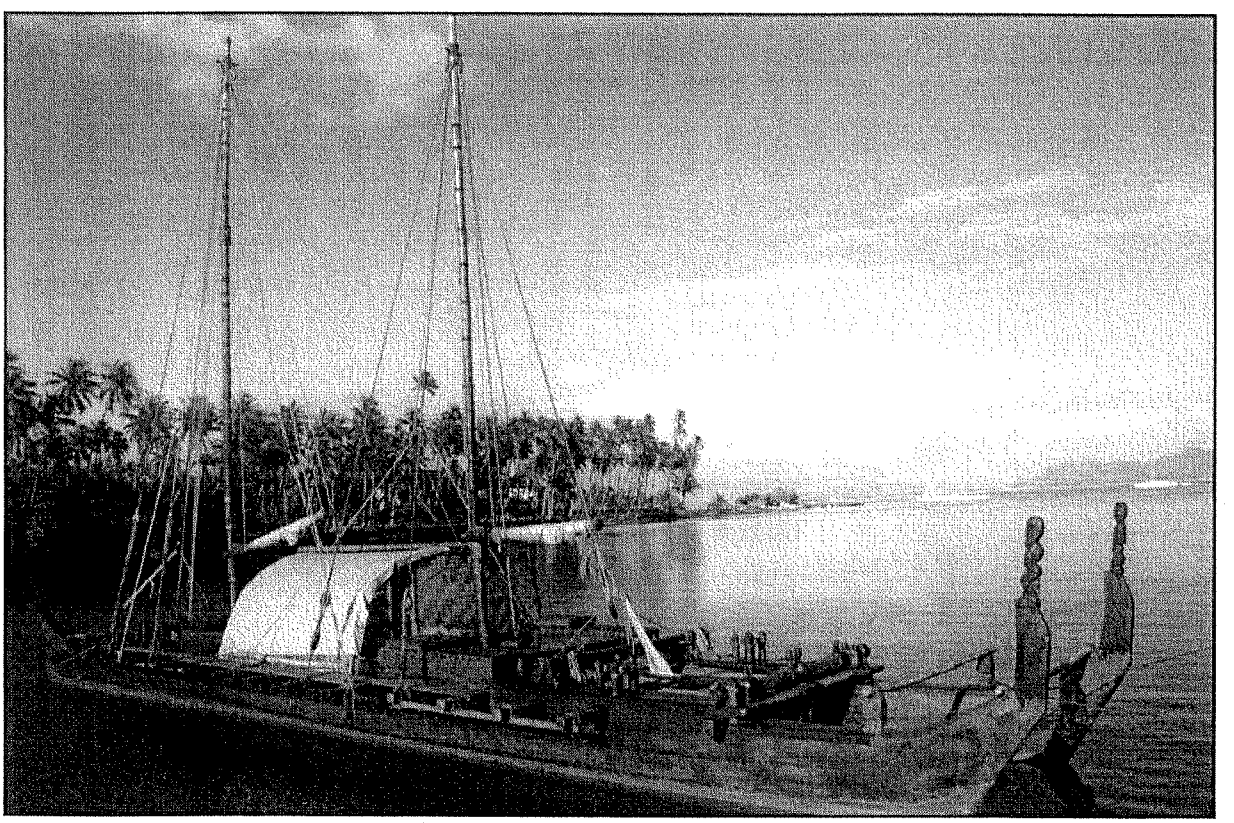

Fig. 2.2. *Faaa, Tahiti, 28 October 1985: Hawaiki Nui moored at Waitupa the day before her departure to Aotearoa. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

Chapter Two

Hawaiki Nui: A Māori Perspective

2.1 Introduction

Hawaiki Nui,[57] named after the "Rising star of Polynesia" (*Hawaiki nui* 1986), was a traditionally constructed, 79 foot (22 m) long and 10 tonnes heavy, double-hulled voyaging *waka* of exceptional craftsmanship. From its early beginnings in Aotearoa in the late 1970s, this *waka*-project has been completely independent of the revival of voyaging in other parts of the Pacific. As *Hawaiki Nui*'s traditional carver and builder Greg 'Matahi'[58] Whakataka-Brightwell of Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Raukawa, Tuwharetoa, Ngā Puhi and Te Arawa (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 3),[59] pointed out during the *Waka Moana Symposium* in March 1996, *"Hawaiki-Nui* is not part of the mainstream propaganda of canoe voyaging; it's quite separate and unique because not only did it link Aotearoa with the other Pacific Islands, it linked Tahiti, Ra'iatea and Rarotonga by bloodline" (*PWMS 1996*: 96).

In 1985, a crew of five (from Aotearoa, Tahiti, the Cook Islands, the Austral Islands, and England) successfully sailed this ocean-going *waka* on a single traditional voyage from the Society Islands (from Tahiti via Moorea to Ra'iatea) to Rarotonga (Cook Islands) and across to Aotearoa. This remarkable voyage was navigated solely by traditional navigation methods and,

[57] The name of this *waka*, "*Hawaiki Nui*", has been referred to in almost as many styles as there are publications, such as "*Hawaiki-nui*" (Evans 1998), "*Hawaiki nui*" (*Hawaiki nui* 1986), "*Hawaiki-Nui*" (*PWMS 1996*), or "*Hawaikinui*" (Nelson 1991; Woods 1995). I decided to adopt "*Hawaiki Nui*" out of all available versions, because this is the style Whakataka-Brightwell used in the only account he himself published on the subject (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994).

[58] About his Tahitian name 'Matahi' see 2.8.1 this thesis.

[59] The detailed *whakapapa* (genealogy) of Greg Whakataka-Brightwell, as given in an earlier publication of his (Whakataka-Brightwell 1987: n.p.), is "Ngati Whatua, Nga Puhi, Aopouri" on his father's (Marei Kura Brightwell) side, and "Whanau-a-Ruataupare, Rongowhakaata, Ngati Porou" on his mother's (Hinerangi Whakataka) side, with links to "Ngati Raukawa, Te Arawa, [and] Tuwharetoa". According to Anne Nelson (1991: 14), Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell is of Ngāti Toa and Ngāti Porou descent. Elsewhere he is said to be affiliated to Rongowhakaata and "Te Whanau-A-Raataupare [sic]", with tribal links on his father's side to Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Raukawa and Te Arawa (Sidney 1994). According to John Woods (Woods 1995: 66), Whakataka-Brightwell is "Ngati Arawa and Ngati Whatua with Ngapuhi and Ngati Raukawa links, a direct descendant of Hongi Hika" on his father's side, and Ngāti Porou on his mother's side.

what was more unusual for experimental voyages in the Pacific from the mid-1970s onwards, it was conducted without the safety net of an escort vessel. In the opinion of *Hawaiki Nui*'s Tahitian designer and captain-navigator Francis Cowan, the fact that *Hawaiki Nui* was unescorted "perhaps goes some way to proving the sailing ability of our ancestors, as well as the durability of their waka" (Cowan 1998: 8). As the curator of the National Maritime Museum Peter McCurdy (*PWMS 1996*: 95) pointed out, "this was an unescorted voyage, it was a magnificent voyage, and, for New Zealand, it was the beginning of an enormous revival of not just interest but in the actual practice of voyaging the oceans."

Besides tracing central cultural ideas associated with *Hawaiki Nui*, this chapter presents a detailed chronological account of the construction of this traditional vessel, beginning with the felling of two *tōtara* trees in the Whirinaki State Forest in 1979, until the final completion of *Hawaiki Nui* in Tahiti six years later. This is followed by a brief account of *Hawaiki Nui*'s only voyage from Tahiti to Aotearoa in 1985. Throughout this chapter, my intention has been to focus on aspects that are culturally significant to my main informant, the Māori artist and carver Greg Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell. I therefore highlight the application of traditional Māori (and Polynesian) knowledge, and the practice and revival of traditional skills in the given context. Whenever possible, I give detailed descriptions of the way traditional knowledge and customs are applied within the contemporary context. Furthermore, I trace the *waka*'s origins from the perspective of Whakataka-Brightwell who initiated the project.

2.1.1 Methodology

Indigenous researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 174) pointed out a central concern, which is particularly relevant for research conducted in a Māori context, due to the "connection of knowledge with *mana*":

> When a researcher uses individual [Māori] informants and interviews [Māori] individuals in a one-to-one context, the resulting information may be a long way from the full picture. The connection of knowledge with *mana* could mean that an informant is not going to reveal too much, is not going to admit lack of knowledge but, conversely, is going to assert influence or a picture of dominance by what is revealed, and is going to give an individual view, from an individualist perspective, of group knowledge and activities.

As I have not been able to interview any of the other key people involved (such as Francis Cowan), nor any other participant on the voyage, I do not claim this to be a representative account for everyone involved in *Hawaiki Nui*'s construction and voyage. A full and detailed account of *Hawaiki Nui* (and her voyage) would require a considerable amount of further research, especially in respect to the Tahitian side of the project which has hitherto been neglected in previous writings (such as Nelson 1991; Evans 1998). Such research would have to include detailed interviews with Francis Cowan, as he was the principal designer of *Hawaiki Nui* after 1981, as well as the traditional navigator and captain of *Hawaiki Nui*'s voyage. In addition, a thorough study of numerous French publications on the subject would have to be undertaken as well as interviews with other participants (such as 'Ace' Cuthers). These would all be essential tasks if an attempt was to be made to provide a balanced account of *Hawaiki Nui* for some future publication (pers. comm. Hicks). Instead, the emphasis of my research for this thesis has been on Māori perspectives on voyaging (and its contemporary revival), and I have therefore based my account on the locally available sources in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In my work I have utilised previously published and unpublished sources,[60] which are largely based on interviews with Whakataka-Brightwell (such as Evans 1998), and his own publications (such as Whakataka-Brightwell 1994). However, I also include a considerable amount of information from Whakataka-Brightwell's presentation at the *Waka Moana Symposium*, which I attended at the New Zealand National Maritime Museum Te Huiteananui-a-Tangaroa from the 18th to 24th March 1996 in Auckland. Besides relying on my own notes, I am also quoting from the recently published transcripts (*PWMS 1996*; based on video and sound recordings from Whakataka-Brightwell's presentation, as well as the podium discussions he participated in). These were already made available to me in early 1998 (prior to their publication at the end of 1999), with the kind permission of the former curator Peter McCurdy and the helpful assistance of Dr. Hans-Dieter Bader and Jefferson Chapple, who compiled the material at the time. Furthermore, Whakataka-Brightwell has studied a late draft of "Part One"

[60] For published sources about *Hawaiki Nui* see Whakataka-Brightwell 1994; Nelson 1991: 14-23 (more than two thirds of which are photographs, maps and illustrations); Evans 1998: 77-124; and Finney 1994b: 64-65. Furthermore I utilised a number of journal and newspaper articles (mainly about Whakataka-Brightwell as an artist and carver, and his involvement with *waka ama*) as well as a film-documentary about *Hawaiki Nui* (*Hawaiki nui* 1986). For critical comments on Nelson 1991, see 2.7.1 this thesis. For unpublished sources, see Taonui 1994: 159-168. Rawiri Taonui utilised Nelson 1991 and the then unpublished manuscript *Waka* (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994) as his main sources, but he also drew on personal communications with Whakataka-Brightwell.

of my thesis,[61] and subsequently I incorporated many of his comments, additional information and corrections in my work.[62] I also include a selection of Whakataka-Brightwell's original photographs, most of which have never been published before and which he kindly made available to me.

My understanding of the available information, and hence the interpretation and selection offered in this chapter, is also based on several discussions I had with Whakataka-Brightwell himself in 1990 (as well as in 2000). Invited to his family home in Gisborne in August 1990,[63] I was able to discuss *Hawaiki Nui* with Whakataka-Brightwell at some length. He showed me a collection of photographs, illustrating *Hawaiki Nui*'s construction and voyage, and shared personal insights and memories with me.[64] Furthermore, he answered all the questions I was capable of asking at the time. In addition to *Hawaiki Nui,* we also discussed his subsequent project, the *waka taua*, *Te Aio-O-Nukutaimemeha*, which he was working on at the time (Fig. 2.3, Fig. 2.4 and Fig. 2.5). This 145 foot long *waka taua*, eventually completed in 1999, is the largest of its kind built in post-European Māori history. According to Woods (1995:66), it is "the biggest ceremonial canoe in the world". Its construction consumed 32 *tōtara* trees, and the completed hull weighs 23 tonnes, requiring 200 *kaihoe* to propel it in the water (Woods 1995: 66).[65] The meeting I had with Whakataka-Brightwell in 1990 contributed much to my understanding of *Hawaiki Nui* and its traditional as well as contemporary Māori contexts. This

[61] At the Waka Ama National Championships at Lake Karapiro in January 2000 I handed Whakataka-Brightwell my latest draft on *Hawaiki Nui* and *waka ama*. He kindly returned it to me at the end of March 2000, together with a wealth of further detail, comments and many pages pertaining to his personal *whakapapa* and his involvement with the development of *waka ama* as a sport in Aotearoa New Zealand.

[62] Throughout this chapter, the changes and additions I made based on Whakataka-Brightwell's comments are marked as personal communication.

[63] The 'prelude' to my meeting with Whakataka-Brightwell and his *waka* project took place at Haamoa *marae* in Pahiatua (co-incidently the first building site of *Hawaiki Nui*), during my travels as a backpacker tourist in Aotearoa between February and August 1990.

[64] At the time this was a deeply emotional process for Whakataka-Brightwell. From what he revealed to me, this was apparently the first time after many years that he had actually looked at these photographs again and recollected his memories. He was still in the process of recovering from the mental, physical and psychological stress he had had to endure during *Hawaiki Nui*'s voyage and her prior construction process (pers.com Whakataka-Brightwell 1990; cf. Evans 1998: 121-122). In retrospect, Whakataka-Brightwell describes this experience as follows: "It's like I had a mental breakdown, a physical breakdown. I struggled for five years [after the voyage] to get over the experience of Hawaiki-nui." (Evans 1998: 122) The awareness of *Hawaiki Nui* being "left to crack and rot in the harsh Tahitian environment" by its French-Tahitian owners during those years (see 2.8.3 this thesis), did not make Whakataka-Brightwell's life any easier either.

[65] I witnessed *Te Aio-O-Nukutaimemeha* at an earlier stage during the construction process, when it was located beside the Whitireia mai Tawhiti Marae at Whangara. Whakataka-Brightwell invited me to have a look at the building site, which was located just north of Gisborne. Unfortunately he was unable to come along to explain it to me in person due to a *tangi* he was called to attend that same day. Nevertheless, I followed the directions he gave me and visited the building site on my own.

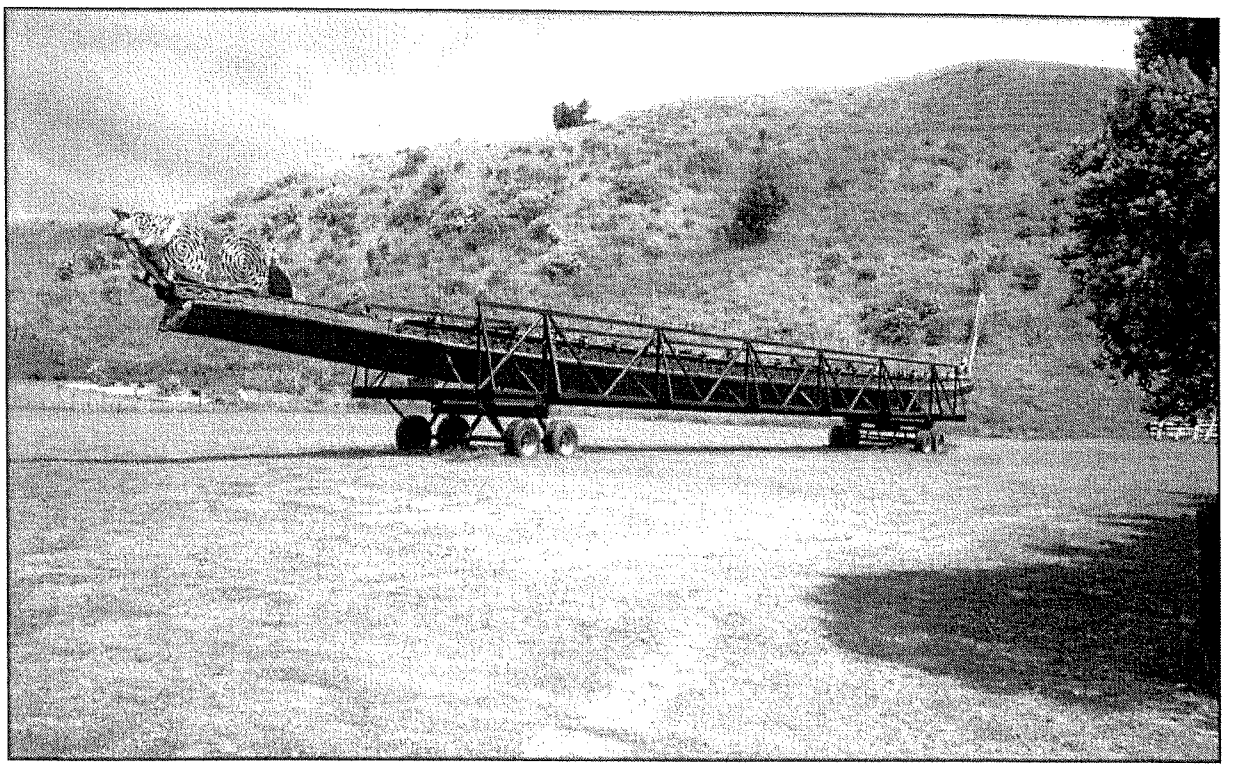

Fig. 2.3. *The waka taua, Te Aio-O-Nukutaimemeha, mounted on a trolley to leave for Hatepe. Whakataka-Brightwell completed the 145 foot and 23 tonnes vessel in 1999. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

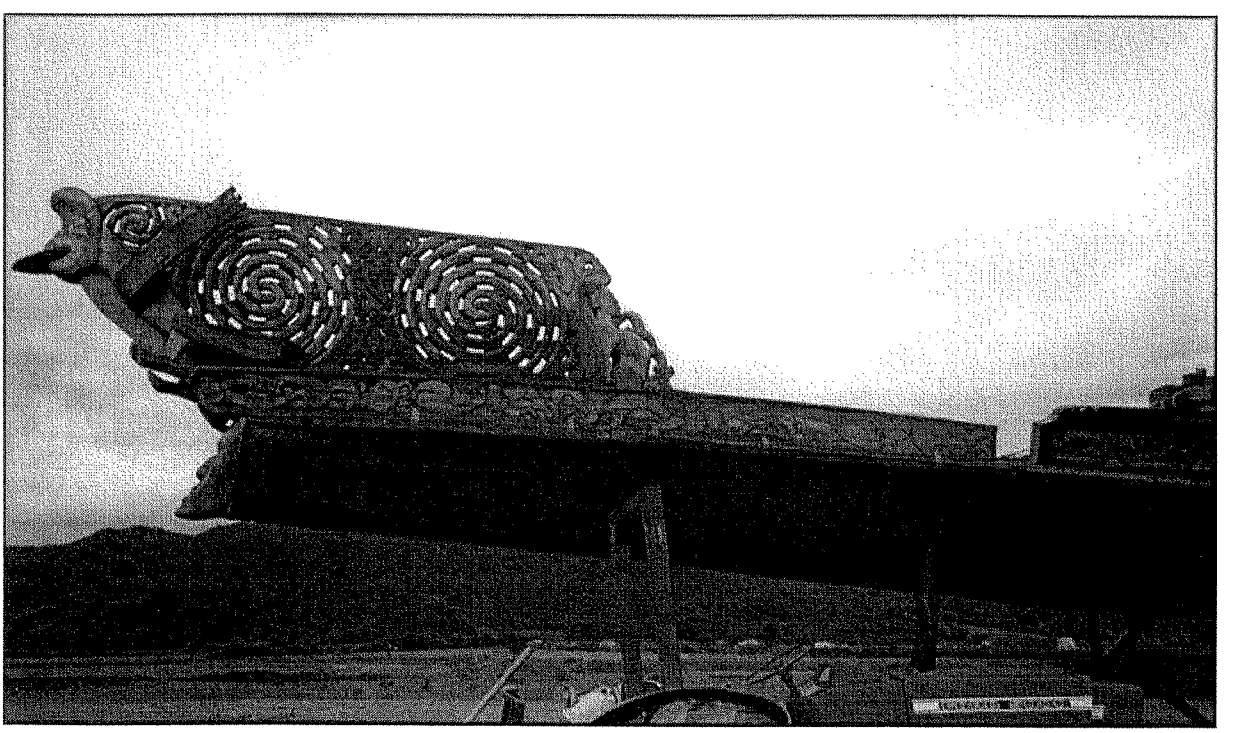

Fig. 2.4. *Hatepe: Relashing Te Aio-O-Nukutaimemeha's tauiho (prow). (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

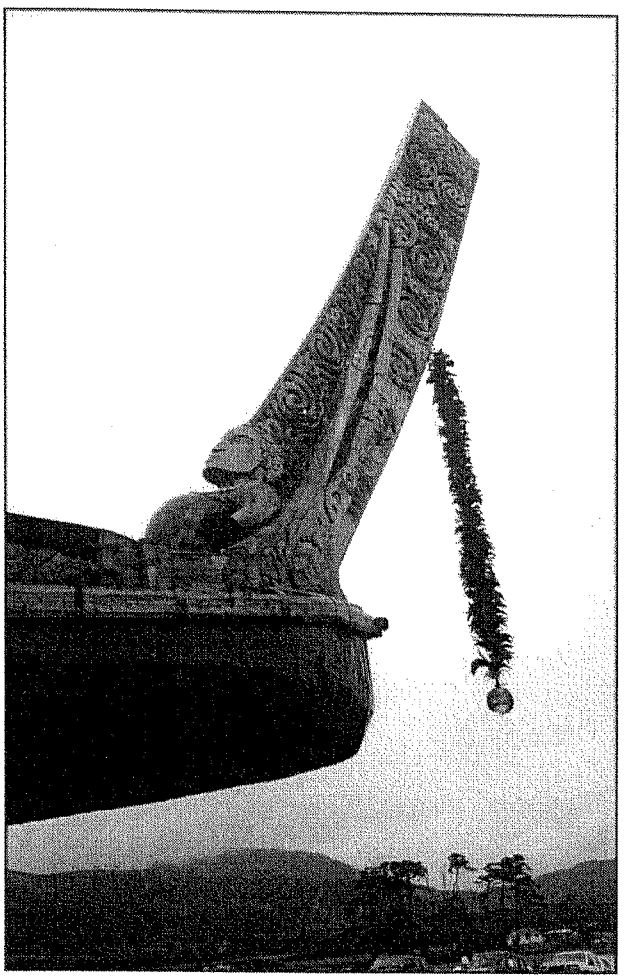

Fig. 2.5. *Hatepe, 1 January 2000: The taurapa (carved sternpost) of Te Aio-O-Nukutaimemeha with the late Rua Kaika's image (woven feather banner by Joanne Hahanamoku-Stirling of Hawai'i). (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

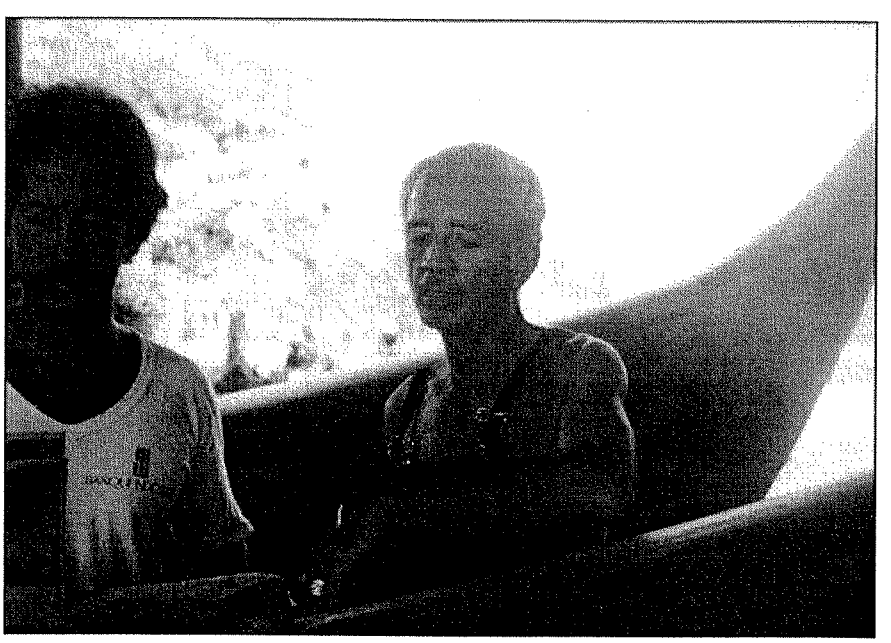

Fig. 2.6. *Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell and Francis Cowan discussing the reversed 'V' splashguard in Tahiti. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

was also the beginning of my own journey with Māori *waka*, which I later pursued in my field work, after my return to Aotearoa in 1996.

Last but not least, my final draft was closely studied by Margaret Hicks who, as an accomplished single-handed ocean sailor as well as a yachting journalist (with *Boating New Zealand*), has followed *Hawaiki Nui*'s progress over the years with great interest. At the time of *Hawaiki Nui*'s final construction and sea trials, Hicks was a resident in Moorea, Tahiti from July 1983 to May 1986 and became well acquainted with Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell and Francis Cowan while she was moored right next to the traditional vessel at Moorea. Since then she has "regularly returned to Tahiti" and has "kept up with the ultimate fate of the canoe – photographing the neglected vessel at the Musée de Tahiti et des îles and then recording the butchered remains at Pirae" (pers. comm. Hicks). Furthermore, she has discussed *Hawaiki Nui* on several occasions with Francis Cowan and received "his permission to record the construction and the voyage in an effort to put paid to various inaccurate accounts that seem to have surfaced in New Zealand" (pers. comm. Hicks). She has also periodically discussed the project with other crewmembers (except for Rodo Parau, who returned to Rurutu). Margaret Hicks' close observation of the developments in Tahiti over a considerable period of time and her resulting insights became vital to the presentation of my work. In April 2000 we had several lengthy and detailed discussions by phone and I have been able to include a number of her written comments in this chapter.

2.2 *Hawaiki Nui*: Searching for a Traditional Design

Prior to the *Hawaiki Nui* project, Whakataka-Brightwell had no experience in the making of traditional *waka*. He was a very bright and talented young carver and artist, who had the enthusiasm, courage, will-power and persistence needed to pursue a major project. Practically speaking, "[t]he main job was to shape the hulls as close as we could to the traditional form" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 9). But what was "the traditional form"? Since the voyaging *waka* had disappeared in this part of Polynesia many centuries ago, how was Whakataka-Brightwell to learn about traditional designs? Whakataka-Brightwell's know-how about the traditional context of Māori *waka*, as well as the skills necessary for the construction of voyaging *waka*, grew as the project progressed. Most importantly, he received support from his

kaumātua (elders) and *kaiako* (teachers), who gave him a foundation of Māori knowledge over the years.

> The technology involved in the construction of *Hawaiki-Nui* was basically through the great Ngāti Tarawhai o Tia tradition of Te Arawa, through a great artist called Wero Taroi and his pupil was Anahi te Rahui, he was my great-great-grandmother's brother. The unbroken traditions were still kept alive but under wraps until 1979 when my mentors decided that a sailing canoe had to be built at that present time. (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell; *PWMS 1996*: 99)[66]

Whakataka-Brightwell particularly acknowledges his *kaumātua*, John Gardiner and Kohe Webster, for passing on to him "what traditional canoe-building knowledge was left in our iwi" (Evans 1998: 80). The late master carver Rua Kaika not only advised him on the construction of the canoe, he was also instrumental in teaching Whakataka-Brightwell the necessary techniques. All three of them forbade the young man to read any books about the subject.

> They didn't want the world to claim that I got the information out of books. Likewise I didn't draw a plan of the canoe on paper. Instead I had dreams . . . 'I sleep, and I have a dream. It's like I'm watching a big cinema screen, and I see what I'm going to do the next day. When I go to work the next day, that's what I do.' (Evans 1998: 83)

To take an example from his time in Tahiti, when it came to constructing a splash-guard for *Hawaiki Nui*, Francis Cowan and Whakataka-Brightwell could not agree on its design and argued about it for three days (Fig. 2.6). Whakataka-Brightwell wanted "a diamond-shaped splash-guard" which he had seen in his dreams, and was "thinking about the backwash", while in Cowan's opinion "it would be all right with just a forward-facing V" (Evans 1998: 95). In the end Whakataka-Brightwell stubbornly put it in the way he wanted to in Cowan's absence, ignoring his instructions (Evans 1998: 95). Its effect during the voyage, in Whakataka-Brightwell's own words, was as follows:

> And man, in the southern ocean that diamond-shaped splash-guard really helped us. In rough weather the bow would get buried as we crashed down into the next wave. Then as we came up we would have all this water sitting on the hull behind the splash-guard. So when the canoe went back down into the next wave, the weight of the water behind the splash-guard was broken by the reversed V. That way, it didn't carry extra water all the way down when it was buried by the next wave. I always reminded Francis of that: 'See, my dream ...' He'd laugh. 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, well I didn't realise then that you were a dreamer.' (Evans 1998: 95)

[66] The Māori names in this quote differ from those depicted in the *PWMS* (*1996*: 99), as I incorporated the corrections made by Whakataka-Brightwell (pers. comm.) on an earlier draft in March 2000.

During his time adzing in Aotearoa, Whakataka-Brightwell also paid regular visits to head carver John Taiapa in Rotorua to get advice and to learn "a historical perspective on Maori art" (Evans 1998: 83). It was crucial for him to deepen his own knowledge and understanding of his Māori background and history. After all he was a Māori carver, who, by taking on this unique and culturally significant project of carving a traditional voyaging *waka*, carried a special responsibility to Māori culture in the widest sense.

2.3 Early Beginnings

The nature of this contemporary Māori *waka* and its challenging journey are ultimately (and in more than one way) linked to the personal traditional journey begun by its builder, Whakataka-Brightwell, in the mid-1970s. The cultural as well as political dynamics he experienced in Aotearoa and Tahiti have significantly shaped the various twists and turns throughout *Hawaiki Nui*'s construction, as well as resulting in a (so far unique) pan-Pacific outcome to the project. The following account is centred on vital details of *Hawaiki Nui*'s construction as told by the builder and carver Whakataka-Brightwell himself.

2.3.1 An idea taking shape

> I guess the desire has always been in the hearts of our great teachers to build a voyaging canoe. (Whakataka-Brightwell in Evans 1998: 79)[67]

In August 1976, Whakataka-Brightwell became an apprentice carver on the Toa Rangatira meeting-house in Takapuwāhia (Porirua). His *kaiako* (teachers) and mentors were Kohe Webster and Rua Kaika. It was these two men who inspired their young apprentice, in his early twenties at the time,[68] to eventually build a traditional Māori voyaging canoe (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 3-4; Evans 1998: 79). Whakataka-Brightwell recalls,

> When we finished work in the evenings, we would often sit down and Kohe would talk about how he would like to see the sailing tradition revived. I thought the traditions and

[67] Since the book I am quoting from throughout this chapter (Evans 1998: 78-122) is based on several interviews with Whakataka-Brightwell (see Evans 1998: 54, 77), and because it is written in the first person singular, it will hereafter be treated, as if it was Whakataka-Brightwell's voice, *despite the fact* that it is the book's author, Jeff Evans, writing. I trust that Evans had the approval of Whakataka-Brightwell to represent him in this way.

[68] Whakataka-Brightwell was born in Masterton in 1952 (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 3).

> the techniques had been lost, but during these evening sessions we began to plan and draw designs for canoes. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 3)
>
> What I wanted to do, I realised, was to help design and build a large double-hulled sailing canoe, and test it by voyaging across the Pacific. Kohe and Rua told me I should begin the project by finding the right trees, and they promised me their support. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 4)

2.4 The Trees

In December 1979, Whakataka-Brightwell contacted two members of the Tūhoe Trust Board, Arthur Meihana and Peter Iraia, about donating the trees for the project (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6).

> The kaupapa, or purpose, I explained, was to build a waka that would make the voyage from Aotearoa to Rarotonga and Tahiti, to prove that our ancestors had travelled back and forth to the Islands. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6)

With the blessing from Tūhoe, Ngāti Whare allowed Whakataka-Brightwell to take two *tōtara* trees from the Whirinaki State Forest and the project began (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell).

2.4.1 Clues for selecting *tōtara*

For the construction of a seaworthy *waka* it is essential to choose the right trees, well suited for the strains of their future purpose. Since Whakataka-Brightwell was permitted to only pick two trees, no matter what the outcome, there was a lot of pressure on his shoulders to select "the right ones" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6). A mistake in judgement could ruin the project. He recalls, "[i]f I felled a tree that was hollow and rotten, then the chance to build a sailing canoe would be gone. I really had to make my selection carefully" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6). Whakataka-Brightwell therefore paid close attention to the selection process, carefully applying the knowledge he was taught over the years by his traditional Māori teachers.

According to Whakataka-Brightwell, traditional Māori selection criteria for *tōtara* trees (in this case for selecting suitable trees for a double-hulled voyaging *waka*) apply to four areas: the tree's location, its bark, its taproot and its crown. The location of a tree is significant as it determines its growing conditions. Trees "close to the valley floor" (Whakataka-Brightwell

1994: 6) should be preferred, due to their better nourishment (as opposed to "trees at the snowline or on the slope of a hill" [Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6]) and the resulting strength of their grain. Thick bark (as opposed to thin or spongy bark [Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6; Evans 1998: 80]), indicates a mature tree with firm grain (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6). Spongy bark on *tōtara* indicates that there is "too much sapwood and [hence] the grain wouldn't be strong enough for a canoe" (Evans 1998: 80), while thin bark indicates that the tree has not reached its full maturity yet. The *tōtara*'s grain would still be too loose (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6; Evans 1998: 80).

Finally, attention needs to be given to the traditionally known 'alarm signals', which are a "soft and mushy" taproot, and the presence of *kiekie* and *rata* vine in the tree's crown. All of these signs would indicate potential bad health for the *tōtara* tree concerned (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6). If close inspection of the tree's roots shows that they are "soft and mushy, it means that the taproot is dying and there is a hollow in the tree" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6). The tap-root system is an indicator for the tree's health "like the heart of the tree" (Evans 1998: 80). Vital clues to the tree's health are also found in its crown. If the inspection of the top of the tree reveals any signs of broken branches or *kiekie* (*Freycinetia banksii*) growth, this indicates that "rain has seeped down through the grain and ruined the tree . . . [causing] dry rot" (Fig. 2.7) (Evans 1998: 81).

> When a tree is dead, standing dead, or doesn't have sound wood, there's often an outcrop like rata vine or kiekie growing in the crown of the tree, and a lot of the trees we saw had this problem. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994:6)[69]

Whakataka-Brightwell spent "only about five days", looking at literally hundreds of trees, until he found the two trees he wanted (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6).[70] He remembers that when first seeing them from afar, two *tōtara* "only about twenty metres apart" from each other (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6),[71] he was able to "see the canoes inside them" (Evans 1998: 81).

[69] Whakataka-Brightwell also observed a large amount of forest devastation caused by possums (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 6).

[70] Elsewhere Whakataka-Brightwell states, that the process of choosing the trees took him about ten days (Evans 1998: 81).

[71] Elsewhere the trees are described as standing about twelve metres apart (Evans 1998: 81).

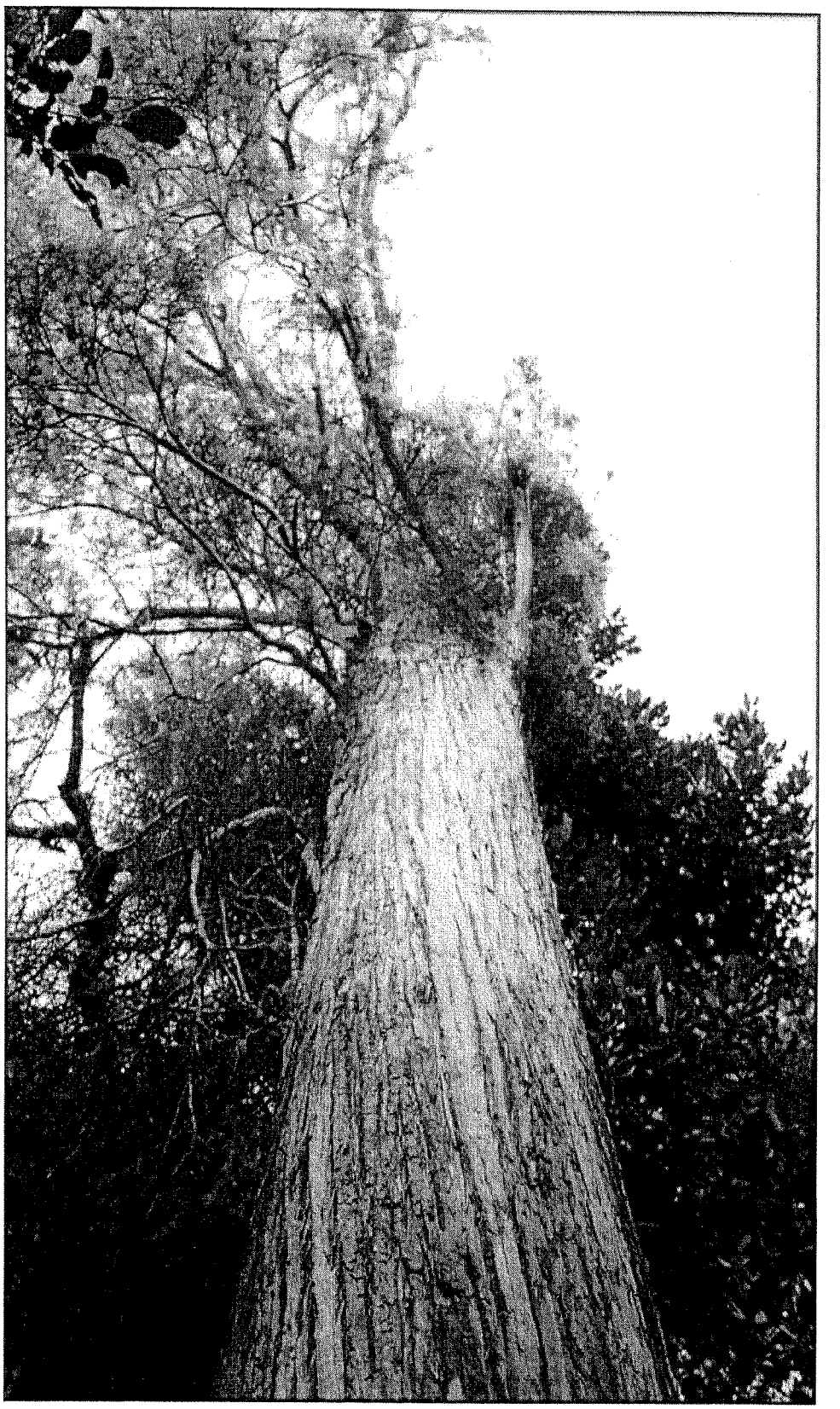

Fig. 2.7. *An example of a dead tōtara tree standing, with an outcrop, such as kiekie or rata vine, growing in its crown. Whakataka-Brightwell (pers. comm.) saw a large number of dying native trees, suffocated by outcrops. This, to him, symbolically reflected what his culture was going through in the 1970s. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

2.4.2 Taking the trees

It was mid-December 1979, and Whakataka-Brightwell found himself forced to take the trees down soon after his selection, instead of being able to wait another six months until wintertime.[72] Because of their maximum sap-content in the middle of summer, it was the worst possible time of the year to cut down the trees. This had two negative consequences for the project. Firstly, it added a considerable amount of time to the already required curing time of the wood.[73] Whakataka-Brightwell comments that taking the trees at the wrong time of the year, "added a full two years to the project" (Evans 1998: 81). Secondly, an unfortunate and unanticipated incident occurred during the actual felling. In summer a tree becomes twice as heavy as during wintertime (cf. Evans 1998: 81). Due to the doubled weight, the wood of both trees suffered considerable damage, "they received splits - big splits - along their sides when they hit the forest floor" (Evans 1998: 83). If cut during the wintertime, this would have been very unlikely to have happened. According to Whakataka-Brightwell, "[t]he best time for cutting totara is between mid-June and early July, when the sap is at its lowest, and the trees are at their lightest" (Evans 1998: 81).

Whakataka-Brightwell and his mentors decided to have a tree-felling ceremony, which incorporated both traditional Māori lore and the Ratana religion side by side.[74] The traditional Māori side was conducted by John Tangiora, elder and chairman of the Ikaroa District Council, and the Ratana church was represented by a Ratana minister from Pahiatua (Evans 1998: 82). Whakataka-Brightwell vividly remembers the actual felling of the trees:

[72] He was instructed by the ranger in charge to take the trees straight away or never. Having also to consider the advanced age of his *kaiako* Rua Kaika, Whakataka-Brightwell agreed to the ranger's request. (Evans 1998: 81)

[73] The wood needs time to properly dry out. If worked on at an earlier stage, it is likely to change its shape again later on. For example, in the case of canoe-building, this might cause the vessel to leak in places, where parts are required to fit together tightly. The time needed for the curing process, as mentioned above, is dependent (besides other factors, such as the size of the tree and its variety) on the tree's sap-content. The lower the sap at the time of the felling, the less time is required to season the wood afterwards.

[74] It is quite common in Maoridom, that on important occasions, such as the opening of a *marae*, the ceremonies are conducted by church representatives (Ratana/Ringatū or others) as well as *kaumātua*. For example, at the opening of "Te Uri o Hina" *marae*, which I witnessed in Kaitaia in March 1997, representatives from several different religious orders, as well as local *kaumātua* gave their blessings. When *Te Aurere* left in January 1998 to sail around the North Cape and down the West Coast to feature at the opening ceremonies of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, the blessings for the voyage were conducted by a minister of the Ratana Church.

> A lot of people joined in the ceremony. After the ceremony and karakia[75] were completed, two New Zealand representative axe-men cut the trees down with a double-handled saw. We had originally hoped to use traditional adzes, but because we had to take the trees six months earlier than anticipated, we didn't have time to make them. All the same, we were determined not to use power tools.
>
> During the ceremony and before the cutting started, the forest was full of bird song. Then, as soon as we started to cut the scarf the birds quietened. There was a little bit of noise about during the scarf cutting, but as soon as the first tree hit the forest floor there was complete silence. It was an eerie feeling, being in that huge forest and no noise about us – just silence. I don't think that the enormity of the project really dawned on me until that moment. I had actually to prove physically that Maori traditional knowledge is still intact and can still be applied today. (Evans 1998: 82)

2.5 1980 - 1981: Shaping the Hulls in Pahiatua and Porirua

> When it comes to building a waka - or anything, for that matter - if someone looking at the form doesn't understand the depth of the work and thought gone into the construction, then they can't really appreciate it. (Evans 1998: 84)

After the felling the trees were transported to Pahiatua (in the Wairarapa) via Tūwharetoa. where a ceremony with Sir Hepi Te Heuheu's son took place to bless the trees and the project (Evans 1998: 83) (Fig. 2.8). The final destination of the logs was Pahiatua's local marae Haamoa, which was to be the main worksite for the construction of *Hawaiki Nui*'s hulls until March 1981 (Fig. 2.9). Whakataka-Brightwell recalls, "the whole community of Pahiatua got in behind the project" (Evans 1998: 83).

> . . . Bill Bendell, a farmer involved in the marae committee in Pahiatua, had heard about the project on the radio, and had offered us space at the marae to work in. He hoped it would provide *a means for some of the young people in the area to involve themselves in the culture*. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 7; my emphasis)

On arrival, representatives of some of Whakataka-Brightwell's different tribal affiliations, as well as the local people of Pahiatua participated in a third ceremony (Fig. 2.9), which included the blessing of the work site for the future *waka* (Evans 1998: 83).[76]

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[75] For a detailed explanation of *karakia*, or traditional Māori chants, see 5.2.1 this thesis.

[76] At the time of my writing, I had no further details available on how these ceremonies were conducted. While I was finalising this thesis in 2000, Whakataka-Brightwell responded to a footnote in a previous draft, where I expressed my hope to uncover some interesting material on these ceremonies in a future interview with him. He informed me that this ceremony has been recorded on 16mm film, shot by Mark Refriest for TV One between 1979 and 1981. Future research with this film material should uncover some interesting and valuable detail on Māori rituals associated with *waka*, but is unfortunately beyond the scope of my present thesis.

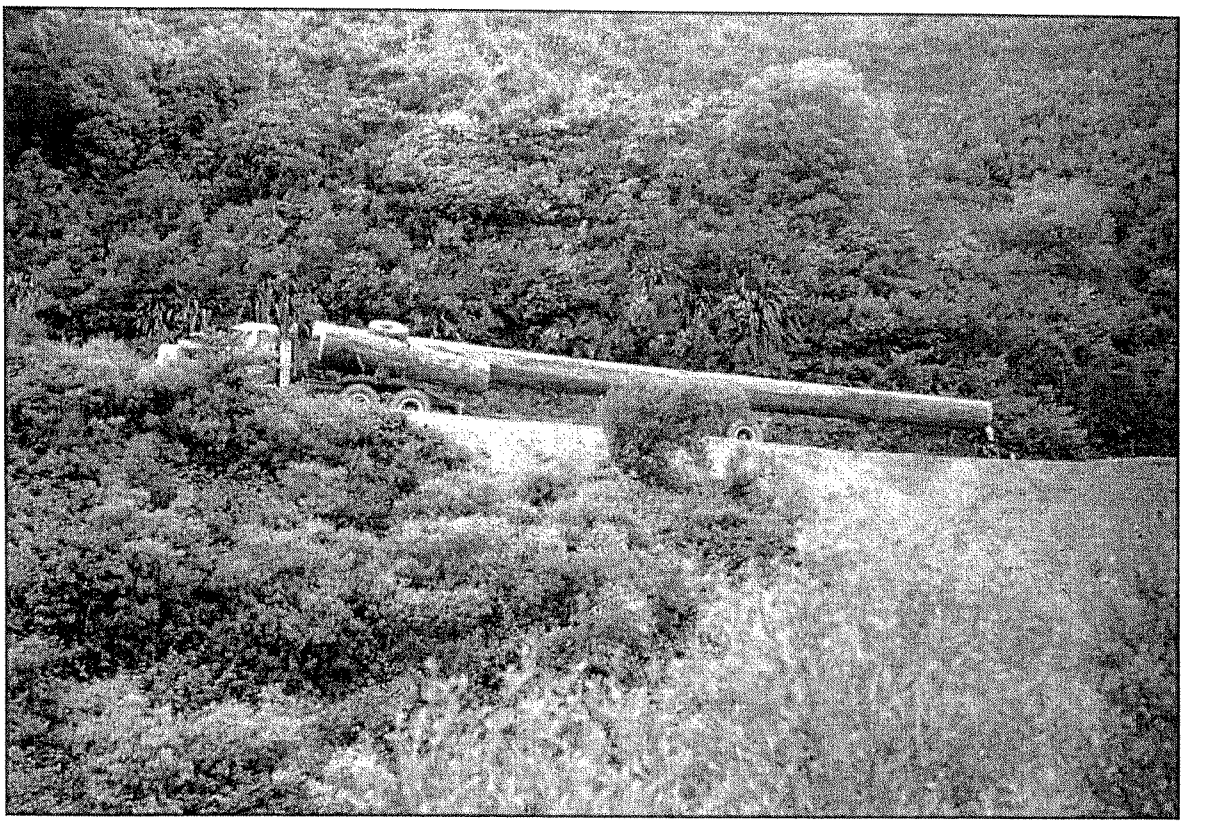

Fig. 2.8. *December 1979: Transporting a tōtara tree from the Whirinaki State Forest to Pahiatua. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

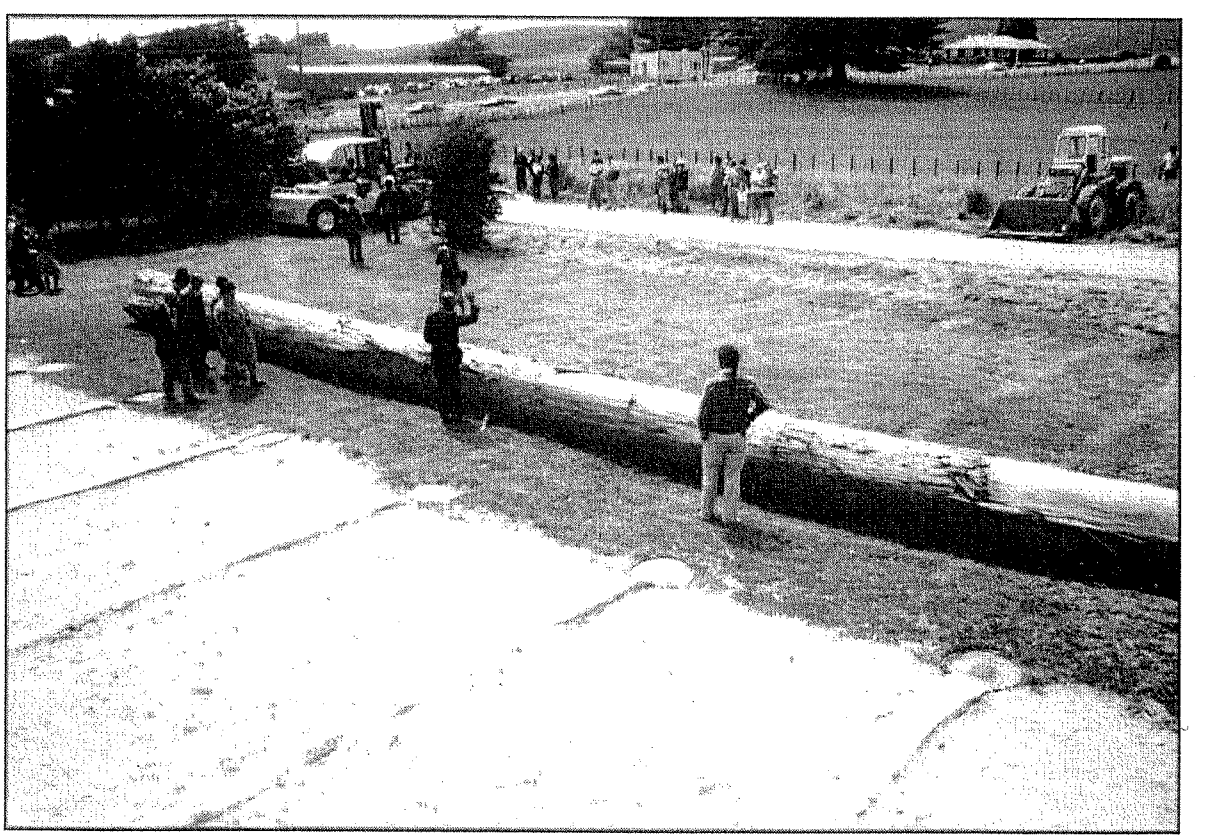

Fig. 2.9. *Pahiatua: Blessing the tōtara tree upon its arrival. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

2.5.1 Examining the trees

It is very important to take the time and study the trees as well as possible, before the actual adzing work commences. The distinctive properties of the material dictate to a large degree the later shape of the hull (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell). To understand the tree is to avoid future mistakes. As Whakataka-Brightwell puts it, "[i]f you don't understand the nature of the material you're working with, you can't shape the wood to its maximum and you can't use it to its maximum" (Evans 1998: 84). Advised by John Taiapa, the head carver at the Rotorua Institute of Carving at the time, Whakataka-Brightwell studied the trees thoroughly after taking off their bark and examined the splits (see Fig. 2.10 & Fig. 2.11). He spent about three weeks carefully considering which side of each hull would be the best suited to form the keel of the future vessel (Evans 1998: 83f.).

> We had to turn the tree so that the splits would be on the side to be hollowed out, reducing the chances of weak timber affecting the sides and belly of the hulls. . . . In the end we had to work around the cracks, and in fact had to go as far as partially redesigning the hulls. (Evans 1998: 84)

The increasing thickness towards the bottom of the hull (*Hawaiki Nui*'s keel ended up being about 600 mm thick) is important, because it "helps with both stability in the water and the overall strength of the canoe" (Evans 1998: 84). Furthermore, Whakataka-Brightwell insists that Māori run their traditional canoes onto the beach, instead of anchoring them in the harbour (Evans 1998: 84). Hence this additional strain on the hulls also needed to be considered when determining details of the hull-design, such as thickness and shape.

According to Whakataka-Brightwell (1994: 9), "[t]he hull shape of a thousand years ago was like a calabash, very bulbous, and narrow in the upper section and, gradually, we got there [during the adzing process]" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 9). Furthermore,

> Traditional sailing canoes had heavy keel construction, so the belly had to be particularly strong and very thick. We kept the thickness of Hawaiki-nui's belly to about 600 mm. The thickness helps with both stability in the water and the overall strength of the canoe. (Evans 1998: 84)

Coming to a proper understanding of the properties of the wood is an ongoing process during each construction phase. Close observation and the examination of the material lasts for the

whole building process and is not just reserved to the beginning stage, when the logs arrive. As Whakataka-Brightwell remarked, commenting on a close-up photograph of *Hawaiki Nui* during the *Waka Moana Symposium*,

> You can see the quality and selection of the wood, you can see the grain. We only chose . . . [hard][77] totara and it's from the long grain side of the tree, you can feel the way the texture is on the edge of the canoe. (*PWMS 1996*: 99)

Hard *tōtara* is, according to Whakataka-Brightwell, "the red-purple grained *tōtara*" (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell). Through the intensive and intimate work with *tōtara* (Fig. 2.11) over such a long period of time, Whakataka-Brightwell became capable of distinguishing about thirteen different grain colours, each signifying "a different stage in its [the wood's] cycle" (Evans 1998: 84). The base wood colours Whakataka-Brightwell distinguishes are "Browns", "Yellows", "Purples", "Reds", "Oranges", and "Whites" (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell). Then there are mixtures and variations, such as "Brown with Yellow streaks", "Yellow with Red flecks", "Brown with deep Purple bands", and so forth (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell).[78]

His enhanced awareness of the inner life of the wood was crucial for the success of the project. Whakataka-Brightwell explained, that "if you don't understand the depth of the grain of the wood you are working with, then you can't predict how the wood is going to react under pressure" (Evans 1998: 84).

[77] The original transcribed text reads as follows: "We only choose *heart* totara and it's from the long grain side of the tree . . ." (*PWMS 1996*: 99; my emphasis) Since the "heart" of the tree is the centre of the log, which Whakataka-Brightwell donated as *tāhuhu* (backbone) to the two local marae in Pahiatua and Woodville (see 2.5.3 this thesis), this appears to be an error on behalf of the transcriber. From my understanding of the present context, referring to the "quality and selection of the wood", Whakataka-Brightwell here comments on the strength (and hence "quality") of the wood, explaining that they "only chose . . . [hard] totara" (*PWMS 1996*: 99).

[78] Whakataka-Brightwell compiled a "grain book" based on his experiences (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell).

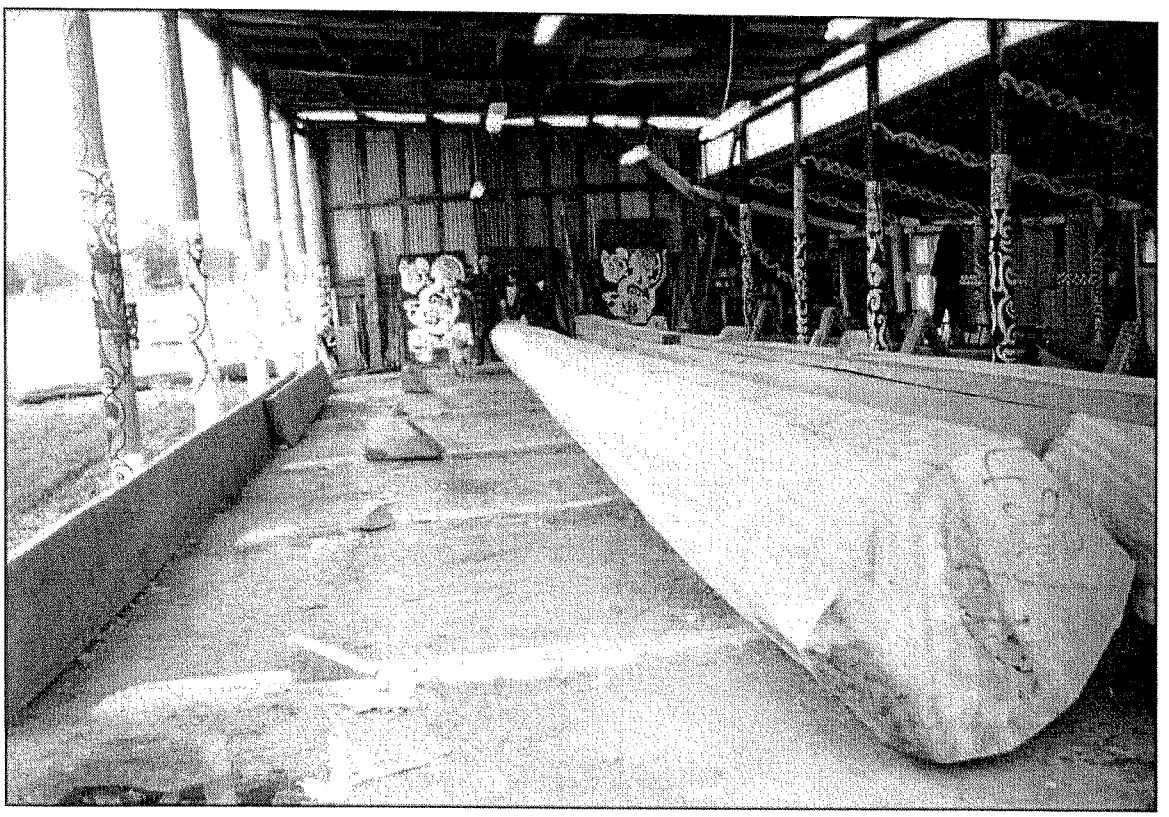

Fig. 2.10. *Pahiatua 1980: Squaring the keels. (Note the deep split right along the length of the tōtara log.) (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

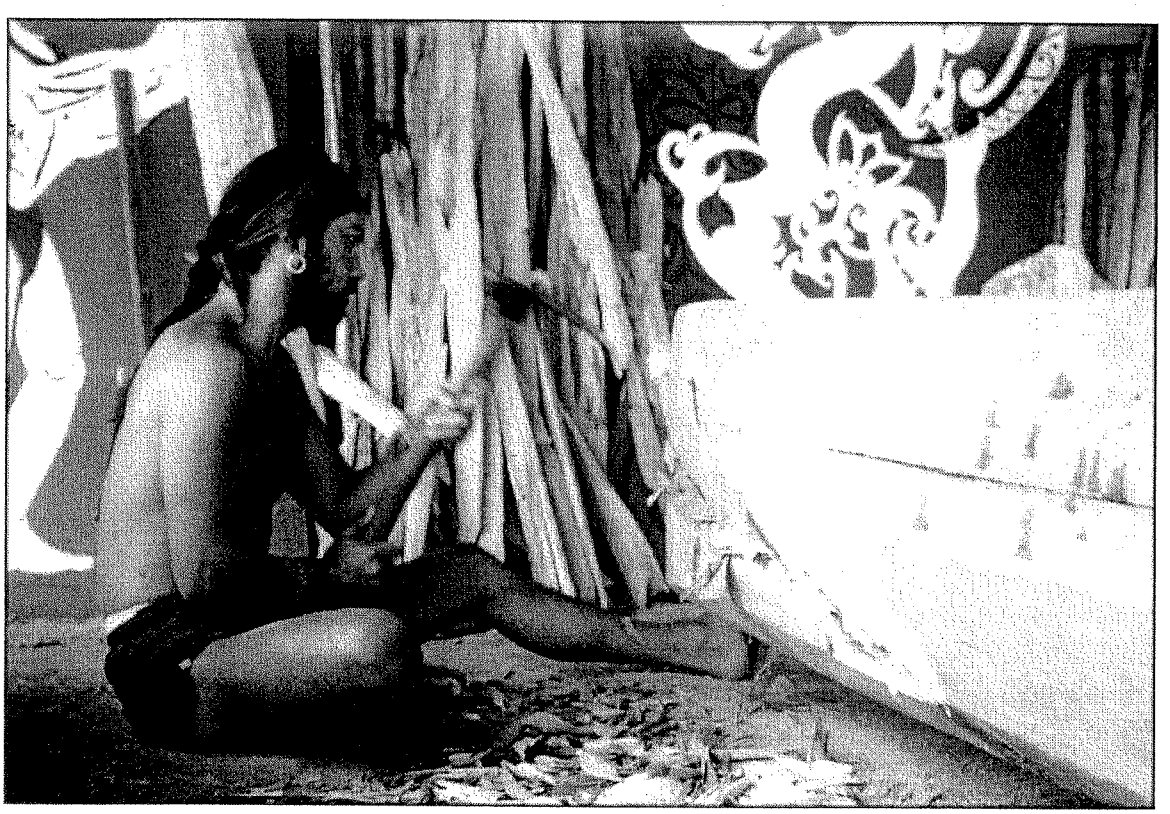

Fig. 2.11. *Whakataka-Brightwell utilising traditional adzing techniques. (Again, note the obvious split along the side of the tōtara log.) (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

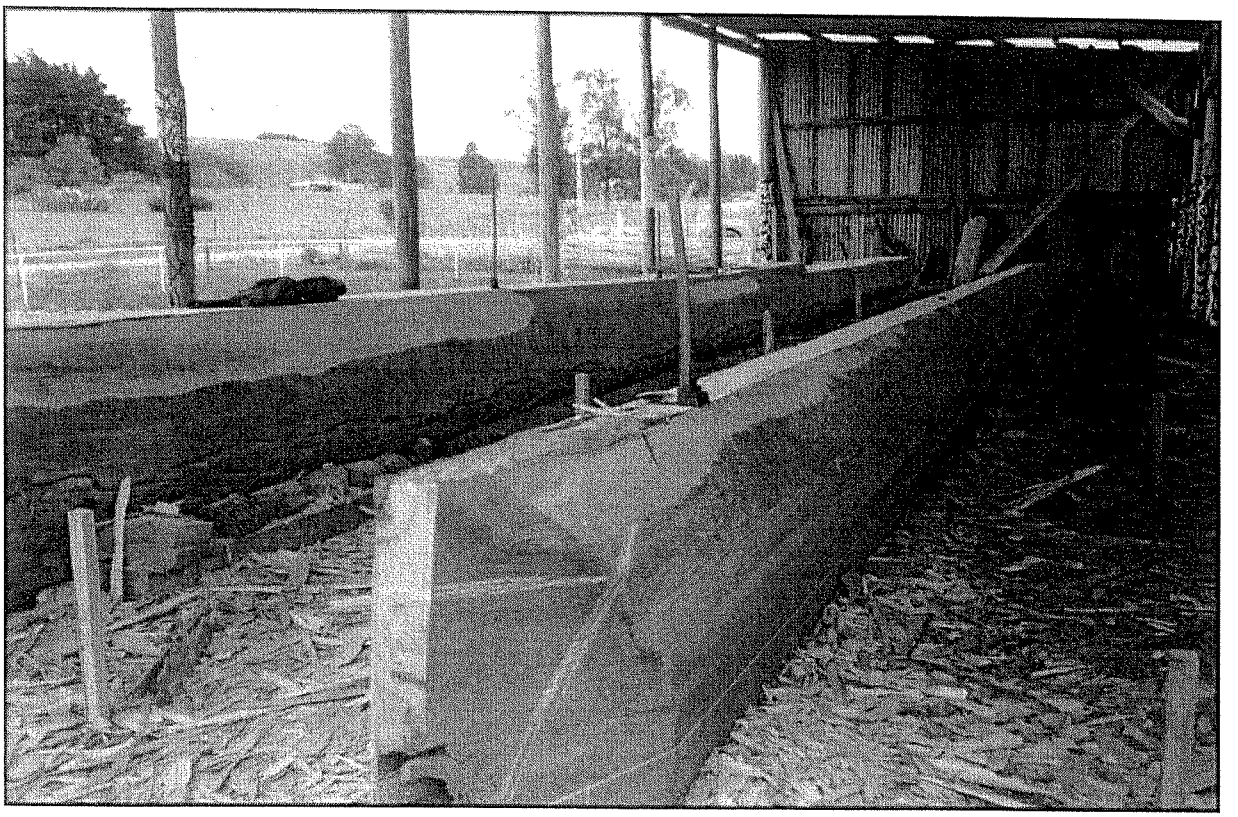

Fig. 2.12. *Adzing the keels. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

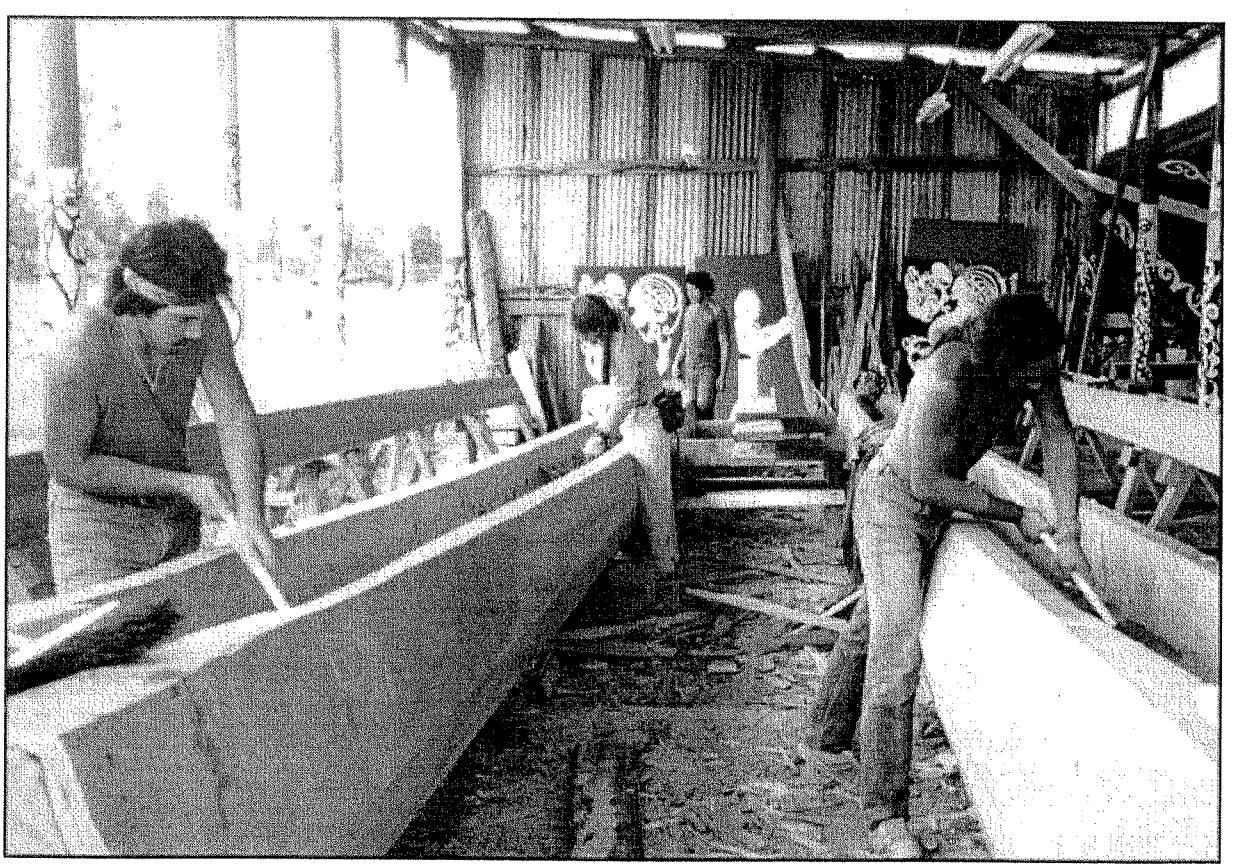

Fig. 2.13. *Pahiatua, July 1980: Whakataka-Brightwell and his helpers constructing the keels. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

2.5.2 Traditional adze cutting

> Adzing reveals what the tree has to offer, and where the faults of the tree are. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 7)

Whakataka-Brightwell recalls that, "the majority of the adze work on the hull was done in Pahiatua, with a bit done at Porirua and some light finishing when we later moved the project to Tahiti" (Evans 1998: 86). *Hawaiki Nui*'s twin-hulls were based at Pahiatua from early 1980 until their shift to Porirua in March 1981 (Evans 1998: 89). Here the work continued for another six months, until the hulls were shipped to Tahiti that same year (Evans1998: 89; Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12; Taonui 1994: 162). With the assistance of a fluctuating number of helpers, and the advice of his teachers, Whakataka-Brightwell conducted the adze work during all these periods.

Whakataka-Brightwell's apprenticeship as a carver between 1976 and 1979 had taught him how "to use the adze to shape wood" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 7), but some of his young helpers in Pahiatua (Fig. 2.13) needed assistance before they were able to use traditional adze cutting.

> . . . I began teaching five other young men, some that I'd worked with before, and some locals, how to use an adze. We used steel, not traditional stone adzes. For the first two months of construction, we worked on the sapwood, the soft outer layers of recently formed wood between the heartwood and the bark. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 7)

The basic completion of the hulls in 1980 took Whakataka-Brightwell and his helpers eight solid months of everyday adzing (Evans 1998: 85). The tools they used were "the shipwright's adze, carving chisels, and the odd chainsaw for squaring off big blocks of wood" (Evans 1998: 85). But, "[w]hen it came to the real work shaping the hulls, we used only hand tools" (Evans 1998: 85) (see Fig. 2.11, Fig. 2.12, Fig. 2.13, Fig. 2.15 & Fig. 2.16). In his own account, Whakataka-Brightwell (1994: 7) displays the four different types of adzes employed, which are a "broad-bladed adze (a very wide adze)", a "medium-sized adze", a "half-moon shaped adze" and a "smaller adze for fine work".

During the *Waka Moana Symposium* in March 1996, Whakataka-Brightwell demonstrated some adzing techniques from the Te Arawa tradition. Meanwhile, he explained the spiritual

reasons for adzing, as well as pointing out some of the advantages of hand-adzing as opposed to the use of machines:

> [P]eople have always asked why use adzes. The simple reason is, when the tree falls, it is a living spirit, a living force. When you're adzing you're actually massaging the tree, saying sorry that you're taking a percentage of Tane, the God of the Forest, out of the bush. What's important about adzing is that a machine doesn't give you the time to study the faults and the strength of the keel you're building. While you're adzing, you get familiar with the grain, the strength, and the run of the hull you're going to construct. That is why, when you remove the sapwood, the true tree is revealed so then you can build the canoe that you want. (Whakataka-Brightwell in *PWMS 1996*: 99f.))

Another important reason for the hand adzing is, as Whakataka-Brightwell (*PWMS 1996*: 100) pointed out, "to give the tree, the nerves of the tree, long enough to stabilise. The Europeans call it 'drying out'; we just call it, the nerves of the tree settling down, so that we can massage that tree into a hull."

The system Whakataka-Brightwell employed to coordinate everybody's adze work and make it consistent on the whole length of the logs, was to put a stringline between the adzes and the hull. He explains, "I used that stringline to form the hull shape so you get a straight form on the hull" (*PWMS 1996*: 100).

2.5.3 Constructing the keels

Many crucial decisions had to be made during the various stages of the construction process. For instance, once the hulls were "fashioned", their insides had to be marked "where the ribs were to go" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 9). All the different options and their consequences had to be carefully considered, because once they were carried out physically, they were irreversible.

> For example, when we were fitting a gunnel[79] butt-join to a rib[80], we'd have to consider the number of pegs needed to hold that gunnel in place and the spacing of those pegs. Then we had to work out where the lashing holes were going to be placed between the pegs, and the individual size for that particular lashing hole. You've got to

[79] A gunnel is "a variation of gunwale" (OEED 1991: s.v. "gunnel"), which is "the upper edge of the side of a boat or ship" (OEED 1991: s.v. "gunwale") (see Fig. 2.14).
[80] The upper edge of the canoe hull is joined, one end flat to the other, to the ribs inside the hulls (see Fig. 2.14).

> calculate everything precisely, because every part of the construction has to do with survival and success. (Evans 1998: 84) (Fig. 2.14 & 2.15)

Except for the heart sections of the two trees, all the *tōtara* timber was used for *Hawaiki Nui* only. According to Whakataka-Brightwell, "[t]he heart of a tree traditionally became the backbone of a meeting house" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 7). Hence, the *tōtara* hearts, "chainsawed out . . . of the two trees to start the hull" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 7), became a special offering as *tāhuhu* (backbone) for the *whare-nui* of the local community in Woodville and Pahiatua in gratitude for their support (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 7; Taonui 1994: 160; Evans 1998: 85). Other than that, not a single piece of scrap wood was allowed to leave the site, as required by Māori tradition for the building of "such a sacred canoe" (Evans 1998: 86). The off-cuts and wood chips from the adzing were burned on a daily basis and afterwards the carvers spread the ashes over the work site (Evans 1998: 85f.). Whakataka-Brightwell recalls, that "[i]n Pahiatua we probably had something like 4 tonnes of chips, and we had the fire going every day" (Evans 1998: 85).

2.5.4 Carving the gunnels

Later in 1981, the hulls were transported to Porirua to continue the work at Maraeroa Marae. Here the master carver Rua Kaika, who was increasingly sick and unable to travel,[81] could oversee "the early stages of construction" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 9), and Whakataka-Brightwell could relieve his aging mentor from daily teaching duties at his carving school (Evans 1998: 89). The late Rua Kaika's apprentices also participated in the adzing work (Fig. 2.16 & Fig. 2.17). With their help, it took about six months to complete the artistic work on the gunnels (Evans 1998: 89). They carved the *whakapapa*, or genealogy, of Whakataka-Brightwell and his ancestors onto the mid-gunnels of the canoe.[82]

[81] Rua Kaika passed away that same year, immediately after Whakataka-Brightwell had left for Tahiti (Evans 1998: 90).
[82] See 2.8.1 this thesis for more detail about these carvings.

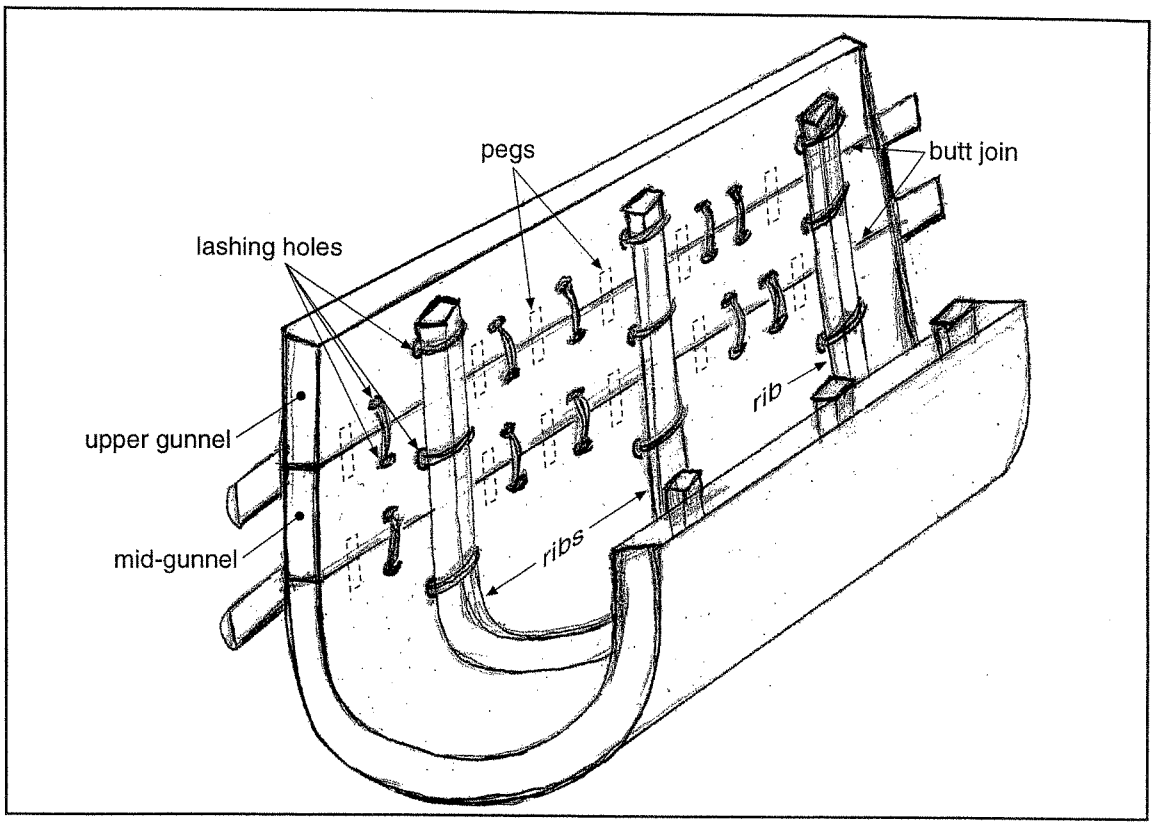

Fig. 2.14. *Attachment of the mid- and upper gunnels to keel and ribs (sketched pegs indicate possible positions only). (Adapted from Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12)*

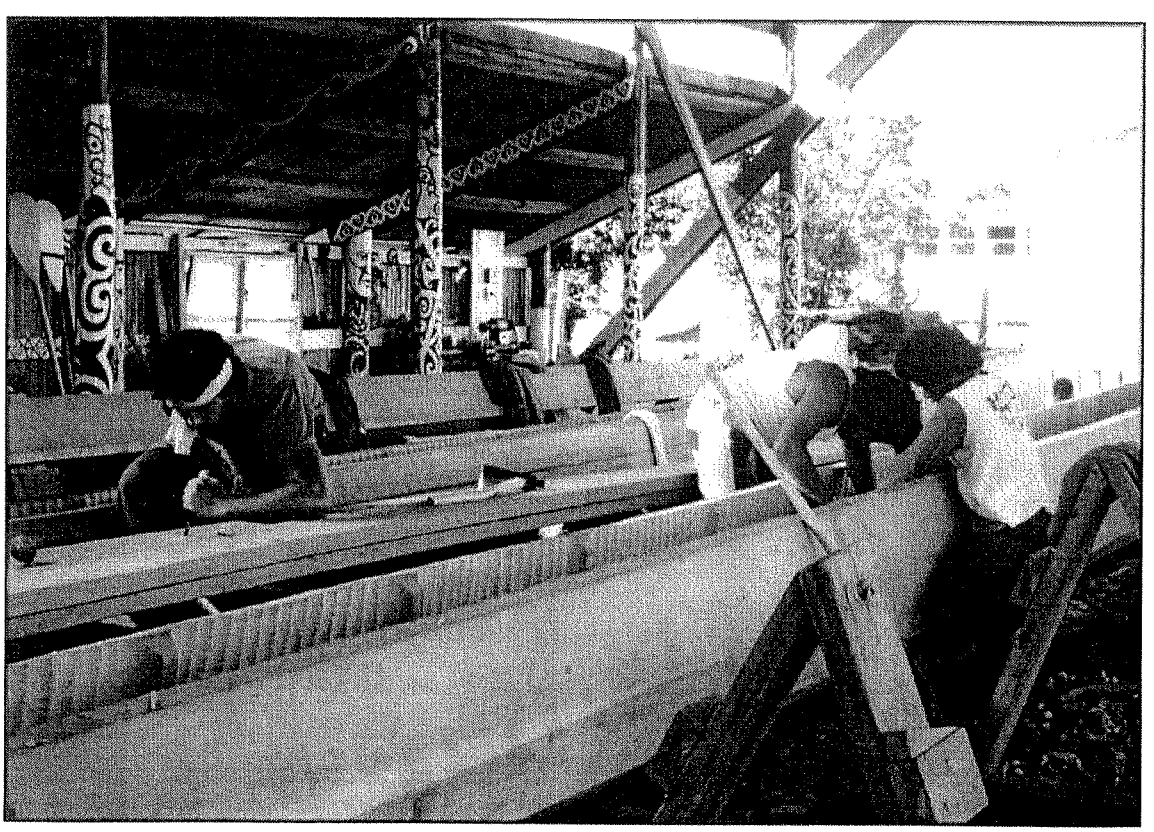

Fig. 2.15. *Māori carvers working on Hawaiki Nui's keels and starting on the gunnels. (Note the carved ribs inside the hulls.) (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

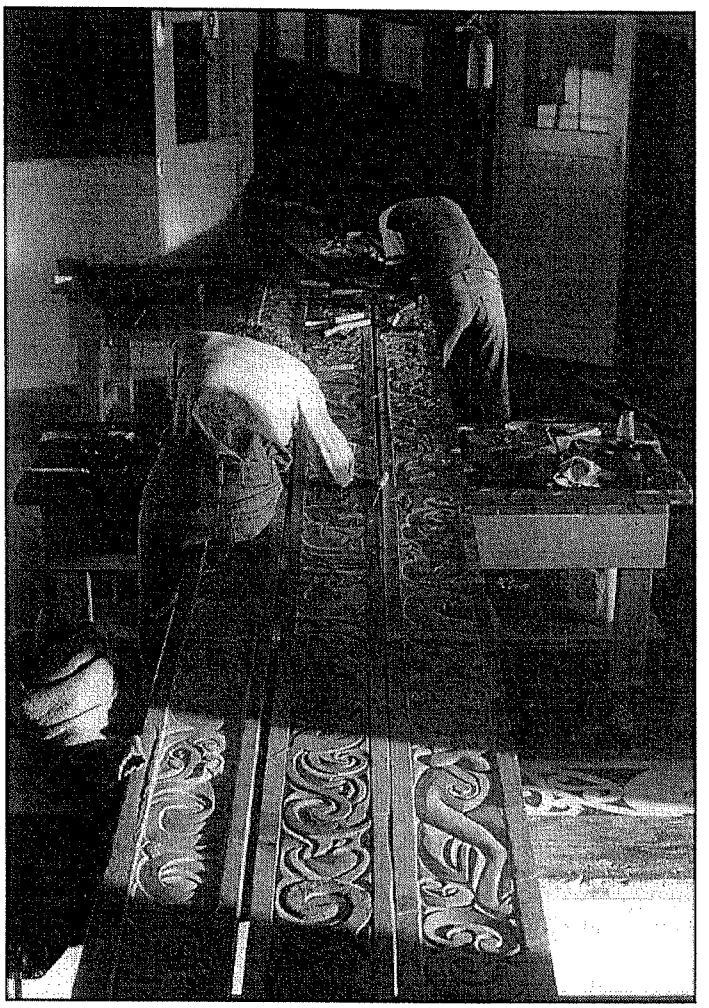

Fig. 2.16. *Porirua 1981: Carving Whakataka-Brightwell's whakapapa onto the mid-gunnels at Rua Kaika's carving school. (Evans 1998: 88)*

Fig. 2.17. *Maraeroa marae, Porirua: The late Rua Kaika discussing the carvings with his students. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

2.5.5 A Tahitian request: Francis Cowan

While Whakataka-Brightwell was adzing in Pahiatua, he recalls receiving

> . . . a letter from Francis Cowan, a Tahitian who, in 1956, had built a bamboo raft called *Tahiti Nui* and sailed it from Tahiti to the coast of Chile. In the letter, he told me that he had long dreamt that a double-hulled canoe would again sail from Tahiti to New Zealand. He'd heard about our project . . . and was keen to be involved. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 9)

For more than two decades after *Tahiti Nui*,[83] Francis Cowan had been determined to build a voyaging canoe. In the 1960s he undertook the building of a double-hull canoe until misfortune struck. In 1967, his workshop caught fire and subsequently one of the two hulls was completely destroyed. Cowan rigged the remaining hull as a single hull sailing outrigger canoe instead.[84] (pers. comm. Hicks) In the following years, though he had the necessary skills as one of Tahiti's last traditional canoe builders, he was unable to fulfil his dream due to the lack of suitable trees in French Polynesia. On a brief visit to Dunedin in 1980, he coincidentally heard about Whakataka-Brightwell's *Hawaiki Nui* project on a TV-documentary (*Te Koha*), and decided to contact the Māori carver (Evans 1998: 86). After receiving Cowan's letter, Whakataka-Brightwell asked his elders "Arohanui Gilbert [Fig. 2.18], Uncle Heta and Rua Kaika" for their advice (Evans 1998: 86).

> I showed the letter to Arohanui Gilbert, my great uncle and an elder of Ngati Raukawa Mai Otaki, and arranged for Francis, who was the grandson of Tamatoa Tautu, the last king of Raiatea, to meet him. Then I went back to the Tuhoe elders who had gifted the trees for the project, and said that we were *proposing to retrace the route of the Te Arawa – Tainui tradition*. We altered our plans: the canoe would be presented to Francis and would make its maiden sea journey from Tahiti. We offered him our gift, which he accepted at a ceremony at Maraeroa. Later, in Tahiti, he would officially name the canoe *Hawaiki Nui*. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 9f.; my emphasis)

At Maraeroa marae (Porirua) in March 1981 (Fig. 2.19), the two *tōtara* hulls were formally handed over to Francis Cowan from Tahiti, as agreed to by elders of Tūhoe, Tainui and Te Arawa (Taonui 1994: 162; Evans 1998: 87-89). The respective *kaumātua* were Peter Iraiha of

[83] *Tahiti Nui*, a traditional bamboo raft built by Francis Cowan and Eric de Bisschop in Tahiti, was to conduct a return voyage to Chile. Unfortunately, after six months at sea, the crew had to be rescued and the vessel abandoned in a storm off the Chilean coast (Taonui 1994:162).

[84] This sailing outrigger is presently on exhibition at Cowan's wife's Art Gallery (formerly a museum) in Pao Pao, Baie de Cook (pers. comm. Hicks).

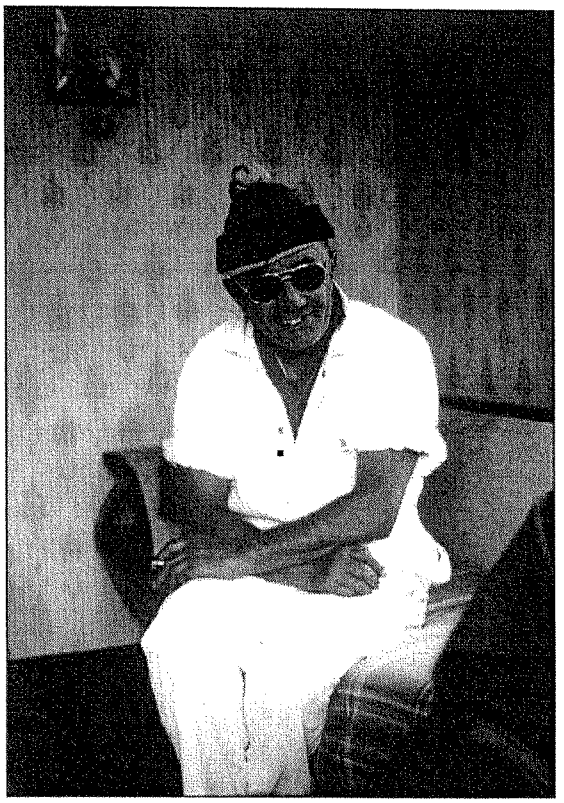

Fig. 2.18. *Arohanui Gilbert (Whakataka-Brightwell's grandmother's brother), who insisted that Matahi never abandon his ancestors, who are embodied in the two tōtara hulls. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

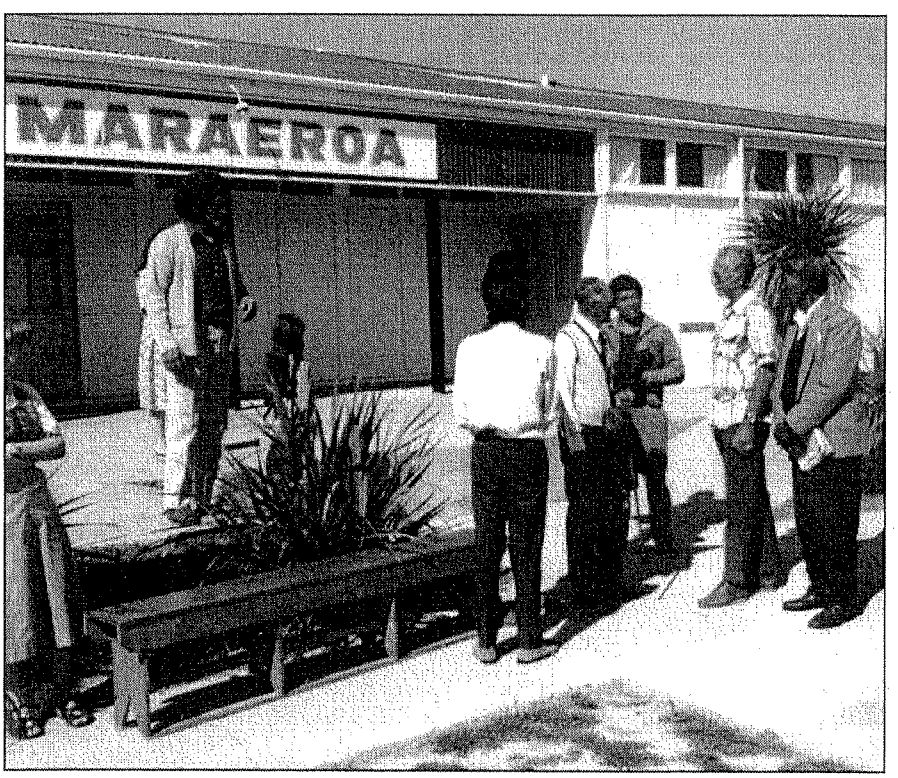

Fig. 2.19. *Maraeroa marae, 1981: (From right to left) The late Rua Kaika, Francis Cowan, unknown, and Matenga Baker discussing the final handover of the tōtara hulls. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

Ngāti Whare, Matenga Baker (Fig. 2.19) of Ngāti Mai Otaki o Raukawa, and Arohanui Kiripiti of Ngāti Rauhoto-a-Tia and Ngāti Mai Otaki o Raukawa (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell). The reasons for their decision are quite complex.

The knowledge, skills and longterm experience Francis Cowan had to offer, appeared to be in areas most desperately needed for the successful completion of *Hawaiki Nui* at that particular time. As Whakataka-Brightwell later remarked, "Francis's advice was crucial to the whole project. In fact without his knowledge it would have been impossible" (Evans 1998: 94). Cowan, as a renowned expert in traditional canoe building techniques in Tahiti, was experienced in "the art of lashing, and the rigging used for traditional sail". These are skills New Zealand Māori had long since lost, and hence, Whakataka-Brightwell was unable to learn them locally (cf. Evans 1998: 87). Francis Cowan's offer to support the project all the way was taken very seriously. At that time it must have been a big relief for Whakataka-Brightwell.[85] Looking back on his move to Tahiti today, he remarks: "I owe a lot of the success of Hawaiki-nui, as well as my own success, to the Tahitians." (Evans 1998: 91)

Once the construction proper of the canoe commenced in Papara Tahiti, the overall control passed over to Francis Cowan. In modern terms, and on behalf of OTAC (Office Territorial D'Action Culturelle, the project's financial backer since 1981), he became the project's director. Furthermore, Cowan was the structural designer and architect of *Hawaiki Nui*. (pers. comm. Hicks) Whakataka-Brightwell, on the other hand, was the master boat builder and, being an exceptionally gifted artist, he was solely responsible for *Hawaiki Nui* elaborate and unique carving designs. Throughout the years in Tahiti, Whakataka-Brightwell worked full-time on *Hawaiki Nui*. Nevertheless, various individuals, from Aotearoa New Zealand (such as 'Ace' Cuthers and Kimihia Whakataka-Brightwell, one of Whakataka-Brightwell's brothers) as well as others from Tahiti, helped out at different times. (pers. comm. Hicks)

[85] Around the time of the handover, Whakataka-Brightwell found himself "embroiled in a dispute over the misuse of project funds" in Pahiatua, which lasted until March 1981 (Evans 1998: 89). Proving himself innocent was a very tiring endeavour, draining him of a lot of energy (Evans 1998: 89). He also realised that a lack of support from Maoridom would make the full realisation of this voyaging canoe in Aotearoa New Zealand very difficult. Cowan's offer was subsequently welcomed by Whakataka-Brightwell, his elders, family and supporters.

2.6 1981 – 1985: Completing *Hawaiki Nui* in Tahiti

In 1981 the two hulls were shipped on the *Bounty* (a ship from Francis Cowan's Company "Cowan et Fils") from Auckland, New Zealand to Papara, Tahiti (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12; pers. comm. Hicks). Unfortunately, Whakataka-Brightwell and Cowan straight away ran into serious financial difficulties. The Tahitian customs refused to release the hulls, unless a tax levy of US$ 10,000 was paid.[86] It took Cowan "nearly two and a half months" (during which time "the canoe was sitting in the open on the wharf") to be able to locate the desperately needed funding locally. This was eventually granted by the Tahitian government and allocated by the Tahitian cultural centre Office Territorial D'Action Culturelle (OTAC), "but we had to hand the ownership of the project over to the OTAC. They were to manage the finance and the administration of the canoe while we built it" (Evans 1998: 91).

2.6.1 Constructing the upper body

Apart from the hulls and the gunnels,[87] which were carved from New Zealand *tōtara*, all the constructions for the upper body of *Hawaiki Nui* were made from Tahitian materials (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12).

2.6.1.1 *Tahitian materials and treatments*

The timber used for the upper structure of *Hawaiki Nui* came from local sources (with one exception – see below). *Mara* was chosen for the steering paddles, and lightweight bamboo for the two masts and the house. Bamboo, in combination with *uru* (wood of the breadfruit tree),[88] was used for the decking (Evans 1998: 102). *Uru* was also used for the foredeck (Evans 1998: 93), and *fallacata* (a local imported wood) for part of the upper structure (Evans 1998: 94).[89] For the deck-houses the Tahitians "alternated a layer of traditional bamboo matting with woven pandanus matting" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12). The wood for the upper structure was

[86] This 10 percent tax levy was based on an evaluation of the hulls at US$ 100,000 by "Pengally's Transport" for insurance purposes in 1981 (Evans 1998: 90).

[87] Gunnels are the upper edge of the side of the canoe. They can be devided into top-, mid-, and bottom-gunnels; e.g. it is the mid-gunnels, which depict Whakataka-Brightwell's *whakapapa*.

[88] Whakataka-Brightwell remarks that the quality of *uru* is equal to that of *tōtara* (Evans 1998: 94). *Uru* is not only very strong (Evans 1998: 93) but also "fairly water-resistant" and hence it did not "get water-logged" during the voyage (Evans 1998: 97).

[89] According to Nelson "woods used [besides *tōtara*] were breadfruit, purau, flacata, mara, atio and uru." (Nelson 1991: 15). I assume that "flacata" is a printing mistake for "fallacata" (Evans 1998: 94), but there is no mention of "purau" and "atio" in Whakataka-Brightwell's account (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994; see also

joined with epoxy resin (Evans 1998: 94), generally supported by numerous dowels (Evans 1998: 98).[90] The bamboo for the masts was "cured" in salt water for two to three weeks (Evans 1998: 100). Whakataka-Brightwell explains, "[t]his made it immune to worm infestation and resistant to the salt environment" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 13). Before and after the sea-trials the canoe was painted[91] and treated with "anti-fouling" (Evans 1998: 101). Other than that there is no information recorded on how the different types of wood mentioned above were treated in order to resist their long and direct exposure to the seawater, the sun and the wind. The original sails made for *Hawaiki Nui* were hand-woven from pandanus in Rurutu Island. But during the sea trials these were replaced with canvas sails (see 2.6.2.1 this thesis; cf. Evans 1998: 100).

2.6.1.2 *Final adzing and construction*

The adzing of *Hawaiki Nui* was completed in Papara, Tahiti. At first Whakataka-Brightwell spent "nearly seven months" building a canoe shed. In the following six months he hand-adzed all the ribs for the canoe. After their completion, he could finally receive assistance from the OTAC, who sent Whakataka-Brightwell a team, the required tools and money. But because he was already running behind in time, Whakataka-Brightwell decided to compromise and he used electric power planes instead of hand adzes to dress the gunnels. Whakataka-Brightwell simply "translated . . . [his] knowledge of adze technology to power planes" (Evans 1998: 93). By early 1983 the progress became visible (Evans 1998: 92-93).

The bow and the stern covers of the canoe were also carved from Tahitian wood, using the timber from natural forks of the trees between the trunk and the branches. That was intended to increase the strength of the bows, because "it would have a natural curve in the grain. Having a fork would also ensure that it was knotted and cross-grained, so that it would be strong enough to take the pressure from the impact of the waves" (Evans 1998: 94). Dowels had to be placed into the hulls to connect them to the bow covers (Fig. 2.20). When attaching these strong pieces to the hulls, the bow and stern covers had to be set first, and then the final adzing could "marry the bow shape to the bow cover" (Evans 1998: 86).

Evans 1998: 75-122).

[90] I found no details on the caulking used in Aotearoa.

[91] Presumably modern treating agents were used because it is very likely to have been mentioned otherwise.

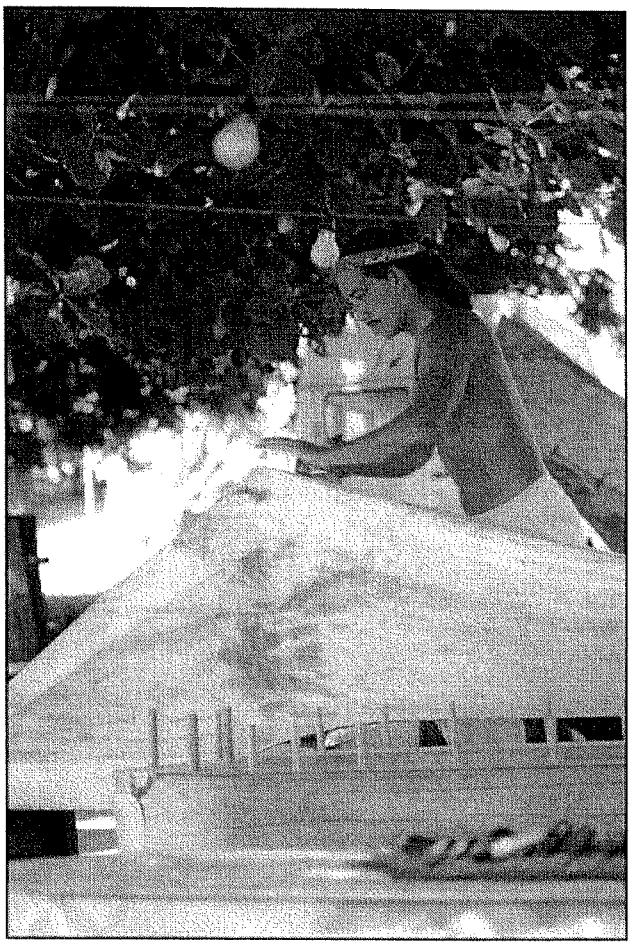

Fig. 2.20. *Papara, Tahiti, 1983: Whakataka-Brightwell constructing the bow covers. (Note the dowels protruding from the hull.) (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

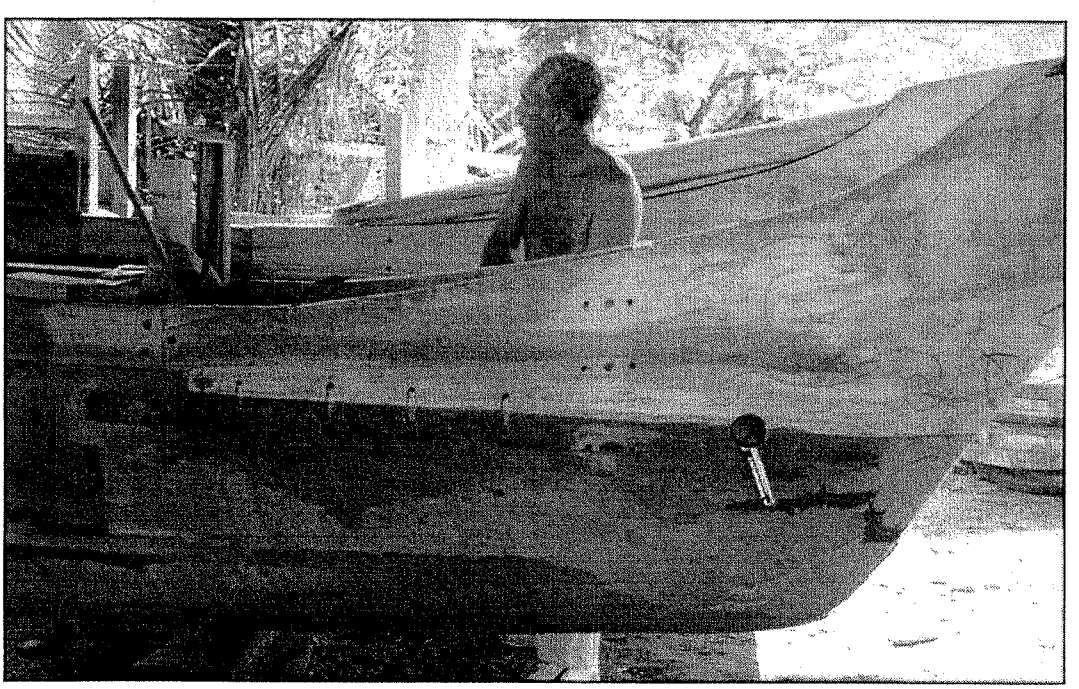

Fig. 2.21. *Papara, 1984: Cowan lashing the bow covers to the hulls. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

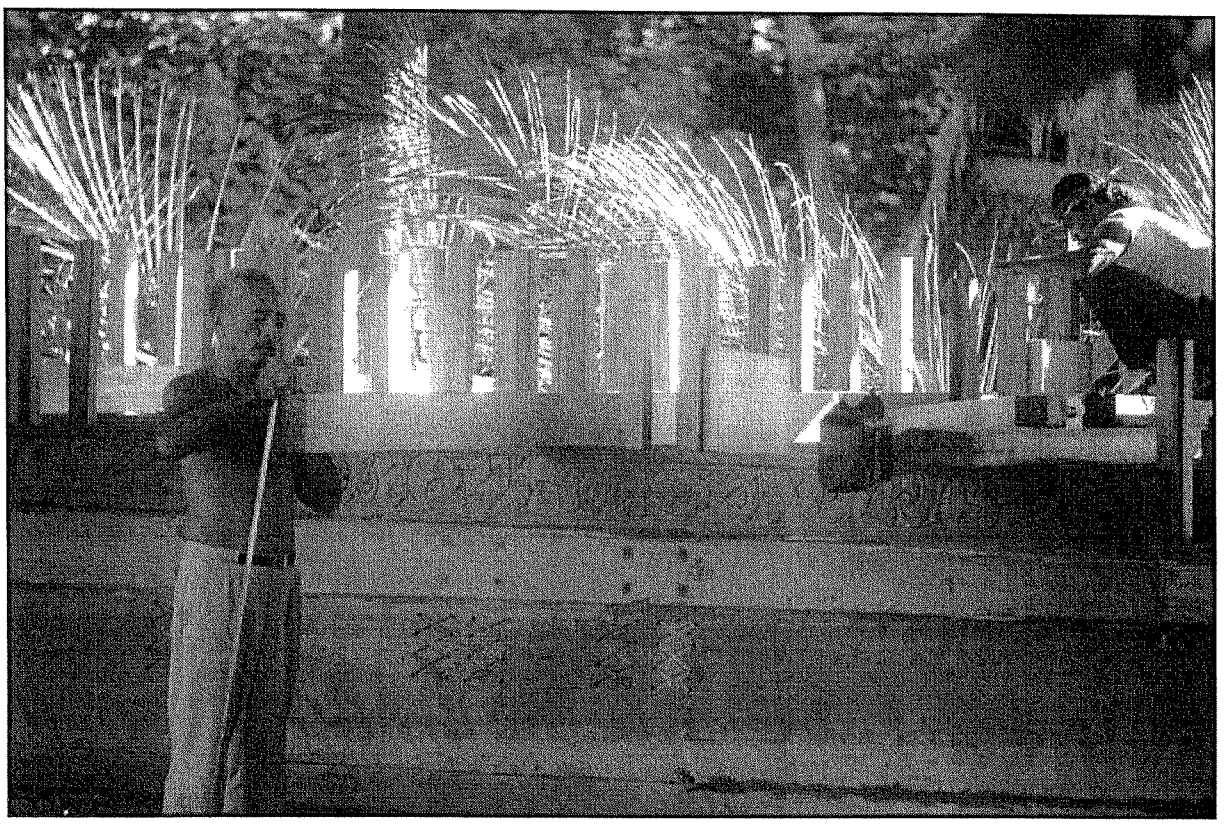

Fig. 2.22. *Papara, July 1984: Cowan and a helper fitting the kiato, or crossbeams. (Note the carved upper gunnels.) (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

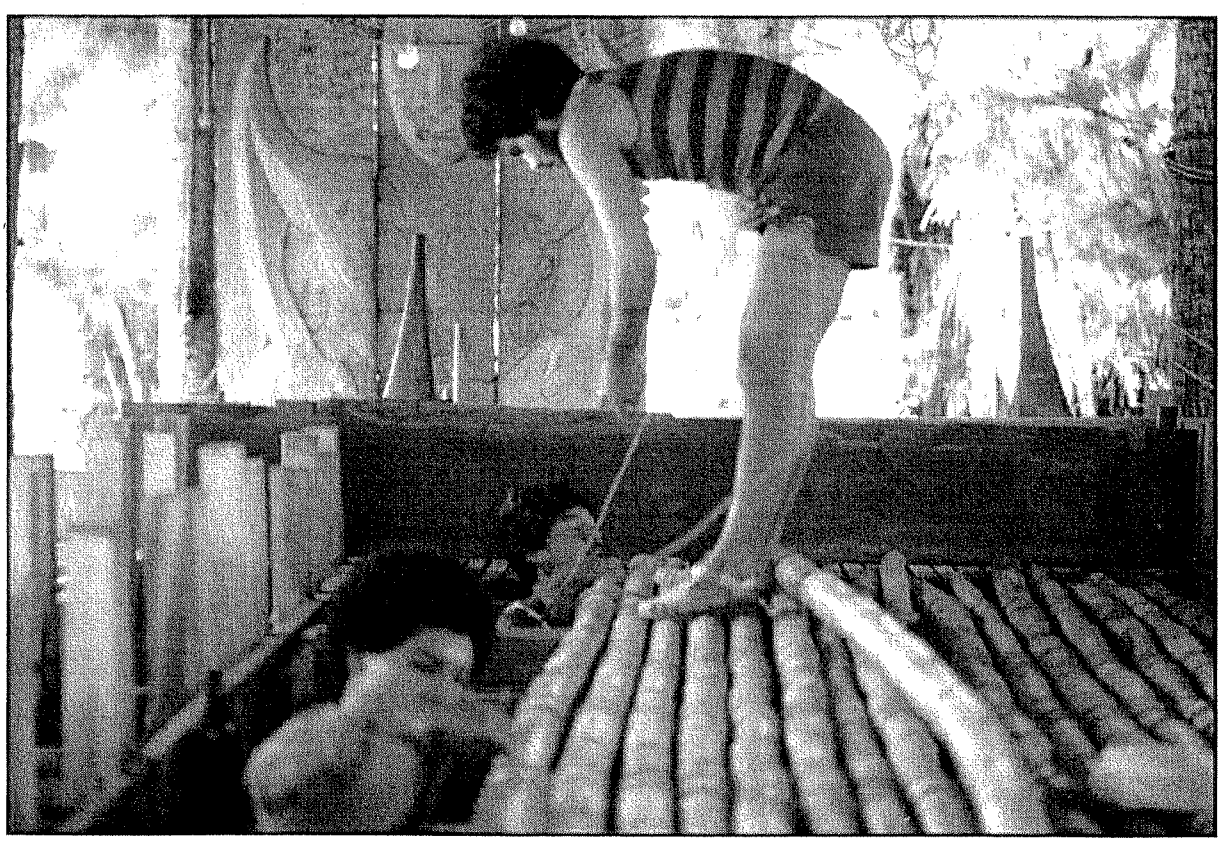

Fig. 2.23. *Lashing the deck of bamboo. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

Fig. 2.24. *Constructing the whare, or deckhouse. Matahi with his Tahitian wife Raipoia, their daughter Orohena and son Marei Kura. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

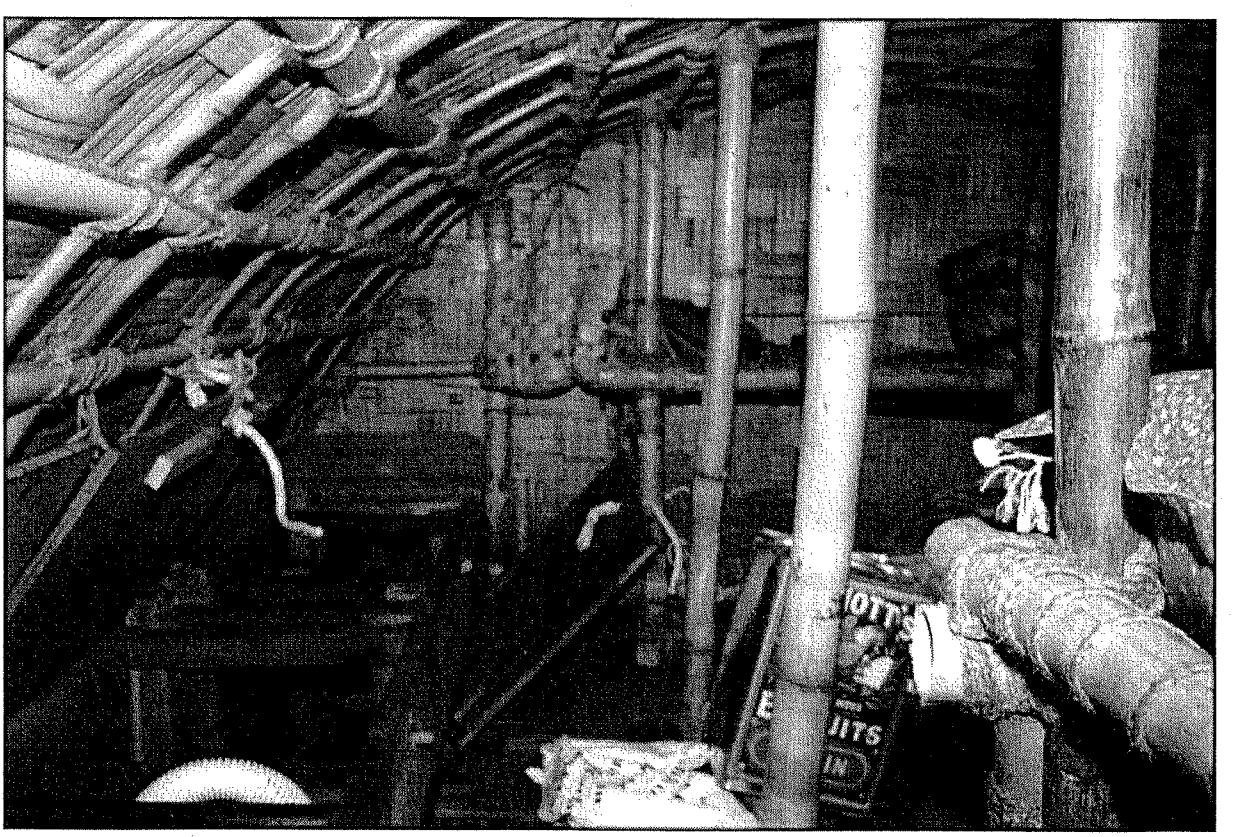

Fig. 2.25. *The completed whare in use. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

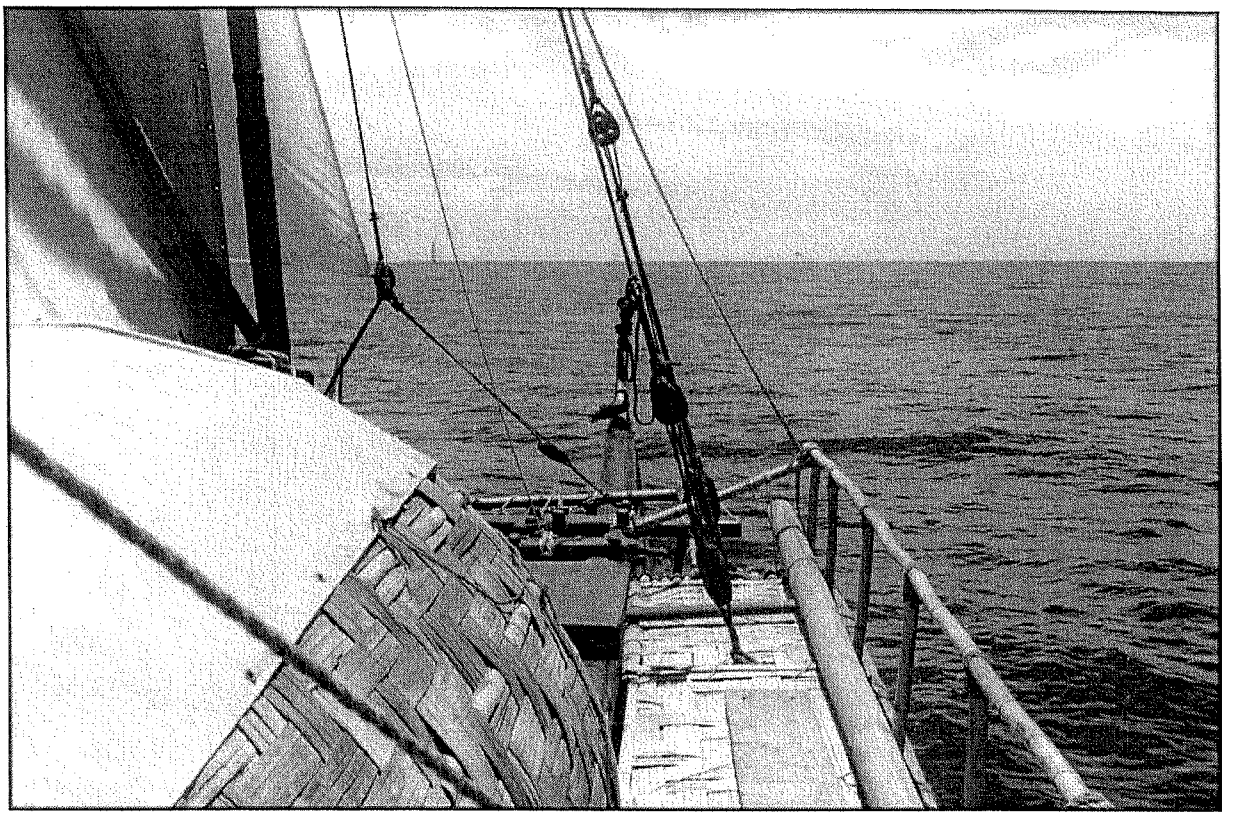

Fig. 2.26. *1984: Hawaiki Nui during sea trials off Moorea. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

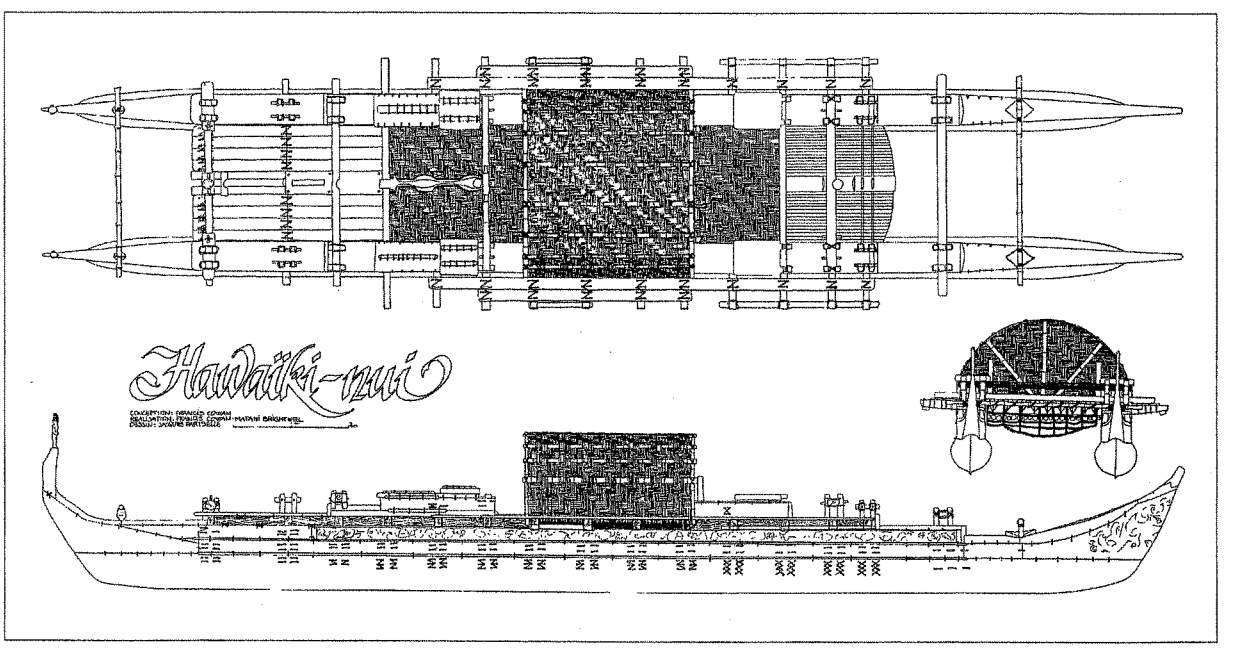

Fig. 2.27. *Hawaiki Nui's construction plan. (Evans 1998: backcover)*

And finally, the two completed hulls had to be connected via the *kiato*, or crossbeams (Fig. 2.22).

> First, the gunnels - or freeboards[92], as they are sometimes called - were lashed to the hulls and ribs. Once they were all in position, we went about attaching the bulkheads[93]. Bulkheads are sort of shaped like an 'O' with a flat top, and are fitted into the hull to support the massive crossbeams that hold the two hulls side by side. Once the bulkheads had been tightly lashed in place, we lined up the two hulls side by side and laid the crossbeams between them. This feature of the construction produced a much stronger crossbeam connection than if we had just lashed them directly onto the gunnels. . . . The main strength in the construction was the crossbeam fitting that connected the hulls together, and the key to that was the bracing. . . . The secret was the crossbrace between the hulls, and the extra support from the bamboo safety raft that was lashed under the deck between the hulls. (Evans 1998: 93)

Thirteen crossbeams were to hold together the two hulls, each of them slotting into a pair of ribs which "had been put in purely by eye" (Evans 1998: 97) on either hull (Fig. 2.22). A deck of bamboo, lashed on top of the *kiato*, constituted the platform above the two hulls (Fig. 2.23). The upper structure, made from *uru* and *fallacata*, was joined with epoxy resin (Evans 1998: 94) which is commonly used in modern boat-building technology (pers. comm. Bader). This was another modern compromise, because the traditional alternative they had considered, such as the collection and application of *tapou uru*, the sap of the *uru*, would have consumed a lot of time (Evans 1998: 94).

One of the big challenges in the construction process was to figure out how "to connect the deck to the ribs and hull" (Evans 1998: 97). Combining their talents, Cowan and Whakataka-Brightwell managed to find a workable solution for what they perceived as "the hardest part of the final construction" (Evans 1998: 97). "The ribs that were protruding up from the hulls were acting as mainstays for the bamboo house, as well as being the attachments for the rope stays" (Evans 1998: 97). The "half-round house"[94] (Evans 1998: 97), Tahitian-made by alternating "a layer of traditional bamboo matting with woven pandanus matting" (Fig. 2.24, Fig. 2.25 & Fig. 2.26), also became securely attached to the ribs of the canoe (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12).

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[92] Added planks to the sides of dugout hulls raise the vessel's freeboard. Freeboard describes "the part of a ship's side between the water-line and the deck" (OEED 1991: s.v. "freeboard").

[93] A bulkhead is "an upright partition separating the compartments in a ship" (OEED 1991: s.v. "bulkhead").

[94] Whakataka-Brightwell's original dream was "to do a Maori meeting-house shape" (Evans 1998: 102), but Francis Cowan's rounded design of the deckhouse proved more practical as it had "less wind resistance" (Evans 1998: 97).

Furthermore, Cowan and Whakataka-Brightwell received support from the Western Samoan community, who wove them "another mat for the walls around the house, and bamboo matting for the roof" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12).

2.6.1.3 *Lashings*

The art of lashing is one of the great traditional crafts which is experiencing a revival throughout Polynesia. In other parts of the Pacific, the art of lashing has never ceased (for example, in Micronesia). About 40 km of *nape*, a traditional sennit rope handmade from coconut fibre, was used for the lashings on *Hawaiki Nui*. A "well-known sennit-making family" from Raivavae in the Austral Group spent eight months on the weaving of the ropes needed (Evans 1998: 96).[95] The hulls and the upper body of *Hawaiki Nui* are held together by sennit lashings only.[96] The principal lashings, "seven turns through the lashing hole under pressure", go through the holes in a canoe's rib and the adjoining bulkhead, and are then drawn very tightly onto the hull (*PWMS 1996*: 99). Whakataka-Brightwell remembers, "it took Francis and two assistants seven months to lash the canoe with coconut sennit rope .... I estimated we drilled about 3000 small holes[97] to lash the ribs to the hull" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12; cf. Evans 1998: 96). Whakataka-Brightwell reveals the principles of the lashing technique used by Cowan as follows:

> The secret is in the tension of the sennit when you lever it through the hole, and how you keep that pressure up as the next round goes through the hole. Francis developed a special tapping block shaped to fit in your hand that you use with a heavy hammer, tapping it while the sennit is being pulled by your partner. It really helps to hold the tension. Then you repeat that process, three to five times, depending on where the tension should be in the hull. (Evans 1998: 96)

To secure the lashings they used wooden plugs and no caulking. Approximately 3,000 *tōtara* plugs had to be individually hand-shaped and fitted to seal each single gap that remained after the lashings were completed (Evans 1998: 96). "[E]ach single hole has a different feature,

[95] In contrast to this, Whakataka-Brightwell reported in 1996 the use of about 22 sennit-ropes, each seven foot long (*PWMS 1996*: 99). In the metric system this would be about 50m (154 foot:3.28=46.95m) and not 40 km. He also stated that these ropes "took a few years to weave" (*PWMS 1996*: 99) instead of eight months, as stated in Evans (1998).

[96] For *Hawaiki Nui*'s construction plan, see Fig. 2.26. For lashings, see also Fig 2.21, Fig. 2.22, Fig. 2.23, Fig. 2.24, Fig. 2.25 & Fig. 2.29.

[97] At the *Waka Moana Symposium* in March 1996 Whakataka-Brightwell reported "there were two and a half thousand lashing holes in the canoe" (*PWMS 1996*: 99).

because the handmade sennit has different widths along its length. It was a very exacting process . . . " (Evans 1998: 96).

2.6.2 Launching and sea trials

Despite government wishes (see Evans 1998: 98f.) *Hawaiki Nui* was launched locally in the district of its Tahitian work site, Papara, on the 27th of November 1984. The local community witnessed the ceremonial blessing and the beginning of the *waka*'s traditional journey on the water (Evans 1998: 98f.). Whakataka-Brightwell recalls, "[t]he whole of Papara, about 1,000 people, turned up for the launching to celebrate and help where necessary" (Evans 1998: 99). But the canoe was not quite ready to sail yet. Whakataka-Brightwell explains, "[w]e didn't close in the upper deck, because Francis wanted to see where the water-line was, and how the canoe sat in the water" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 13). After the launching the unfinished *waka* was towed from Papara to Fa'aa. There the final construction work was completed with the assistance of Fa'aa's mayor, who had offered his support in form of funding and labour (Evans 1998: 100). Still to come was the completion of the upper deck, which included the construction of two cabins (Fig. 2.28), and, most importantly, the collection and preparation of bamboo for the fitting of the masts (Evans 1998: 98, 100). Whakataka-Brightwell remembers,

> . . . we had to decide what materials to use for the mast. Since we were building the canoe entirely of traditional materials, Francis decided to use thirteen-metre spars made from local bamboo, supported by bamboo splints, lashed together with coconut sennit rope. The booms were bamboo as well.

Finally, after the bamboo had been treated "by soaking it in salt water" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 13) and the two masts set, the sea-trials could commence. From then on it took "ten months to perfect the sailing ability of the canoe" (Evans 1998: 99) in 1985.

2.6.2.1 *Sails*

Three sets of sails were made for *Hawaiki Nui*. The first set of sails was claw shaped and soon discarded (pers. comm. Hicks). Three days were spent testing the second set, the precious hand-woven pandanus sails (Fig. 2.28). The results were rather disappointing because the sails turned out to be "too heavy" (Evans 1998: 100) for their purpose. Three men alone were needed just to manoeuvre them, "which would have been too many in an emergency" (Evans 1998: 100). A comfortable carrying capacity for *Hawaiki Nui*'s voyage was limited to five crewmembers

and their provisions (see Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 14). In the end the beautiful pandanus sails were kept on board throughout the voyage, and used "for show" only, as *Hawaiki Nui* was entering or leaving port. Out of sight of land the crew used a third set of sails made from canvas, a much lighter material and hence easier to handle (Evans 1998: 100). This working rig consisted of a jib, bermuda main and mizzen,[98] and all sails were made from modern materials (pers. comm. Hicks).

2.6.2.2 *Sea trials and final adjustments*

According to Whakataka-Brightwell, the first sea-trial was "a disaster" (Evans 1998: 100). Instead of being able to sail the distance of 22 km from Fa'aa to Moorea they ended up having to be towed. Hence, after the "first unsuccessful sea-trials" (Evans 1998: 101) the canoe was put up on land for the following "further adjustment" and "alterations" (Evans 1998: 100).[99] Firstly, they brought the mizzen forward "by several feet to improve efficiency" (Evans 1998: 101). In due course the after house (Fig. 2.28) had to be removed. The crossbeams were reduced in length. They also removed the safety rail around the canoe, but this was done purely for aesthetic reasons. Other work included the cleaning and repainting of the canoe and a thorough inspection of the lashings (Evans 1998: 101). Seeing the finished *waka* for the first time on land, Whakataka-Brightwell recalls, "I loved the lines - it appealed to my eye - and it was then I knew the canoe would make it to Aotearoa. It looked right; it just looked like it was the right design" (Evans 1998: 100). However, the following sea trials (Fig. 2.28 & 2.29) revealed that previous difficulties in turning the canoe persisted (Evans 1998: 101). Whakataka-Brightwell remembers, "[s]ome days she was easy to turn, and we could normally bring the nose of the canoe around into the wind with a big, long, sculling paddle. But other times she could take as long as two hours to turn" (Evans 1998: 101). Eventually, the steering paddles had to be reshaped "to suit the canoe's balance" (Evans 1998: 102). The steering system was finally perfected during six months of trials, using "a permanent centre-board paddle" with "one big steering blade" (Evans 1998: 101).

[98] A jib is "a triangular staysail from the outer end of the jib-boom to the top of the foremast or from the bowsprit to the masthead" (OEED 1991: s.v. "jib"). Bermuda main refers to a bermuda-shaped sail (pers. comm. Hicks) and the mizzen here is "the mast next aft to the mainmast" (OEED 1991: s.v. "mizzen").

[99] Unfortunately none of my sources reveal further details about the sea trials. What were the observations made? How did the canoe behave in the water? In Margaret Hicks' opinion, *Hawaiki Nui* "sadly did not have nearly enough sea trials" due to a lack of financial resources (pers. comm. Hicks).

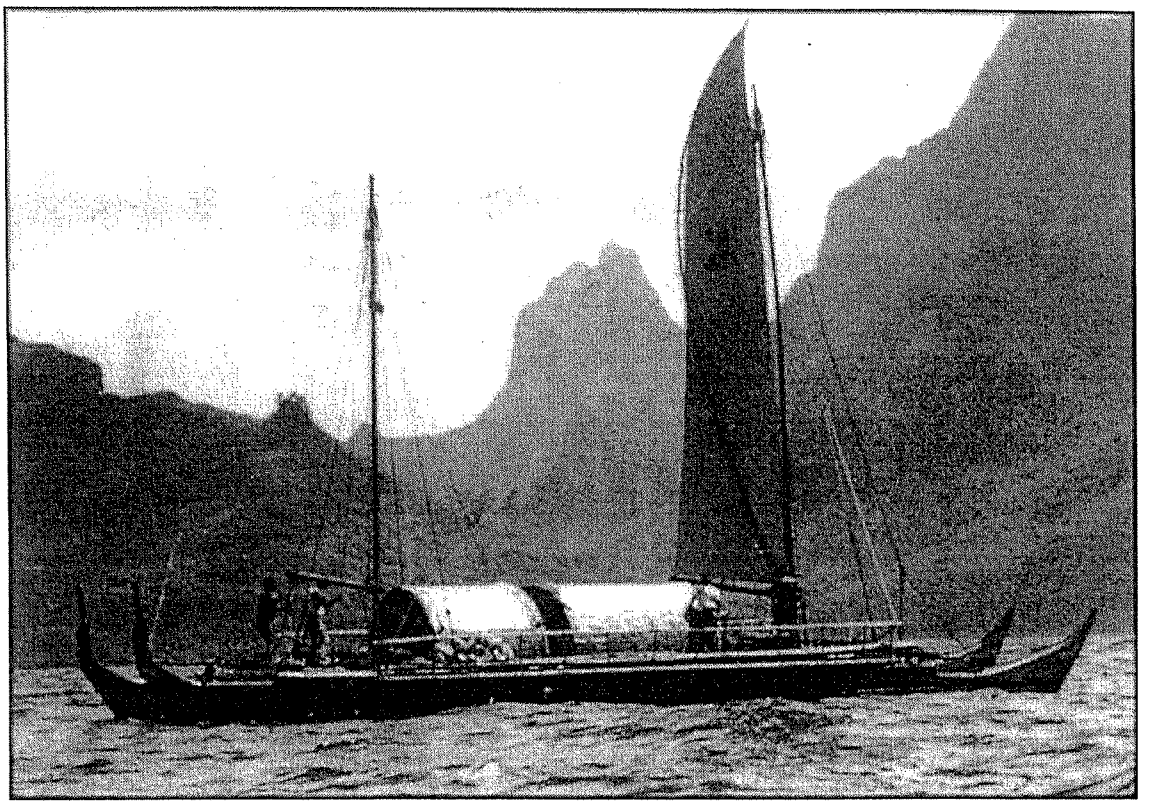

Fig. 2.28. *Hawaiki Nui's crew testing a traditional hand-woven pandanus sail off Moorea. (The above is Hawaiki Nui's original design, before alterations, such as the removal of the after house, etc. ; cf. Fig. 2.2.) (This image, printed incorrectly in Nelson [1991: 21] [pers. comm. Hicks], has been flipped 180 degrees by the author.)*

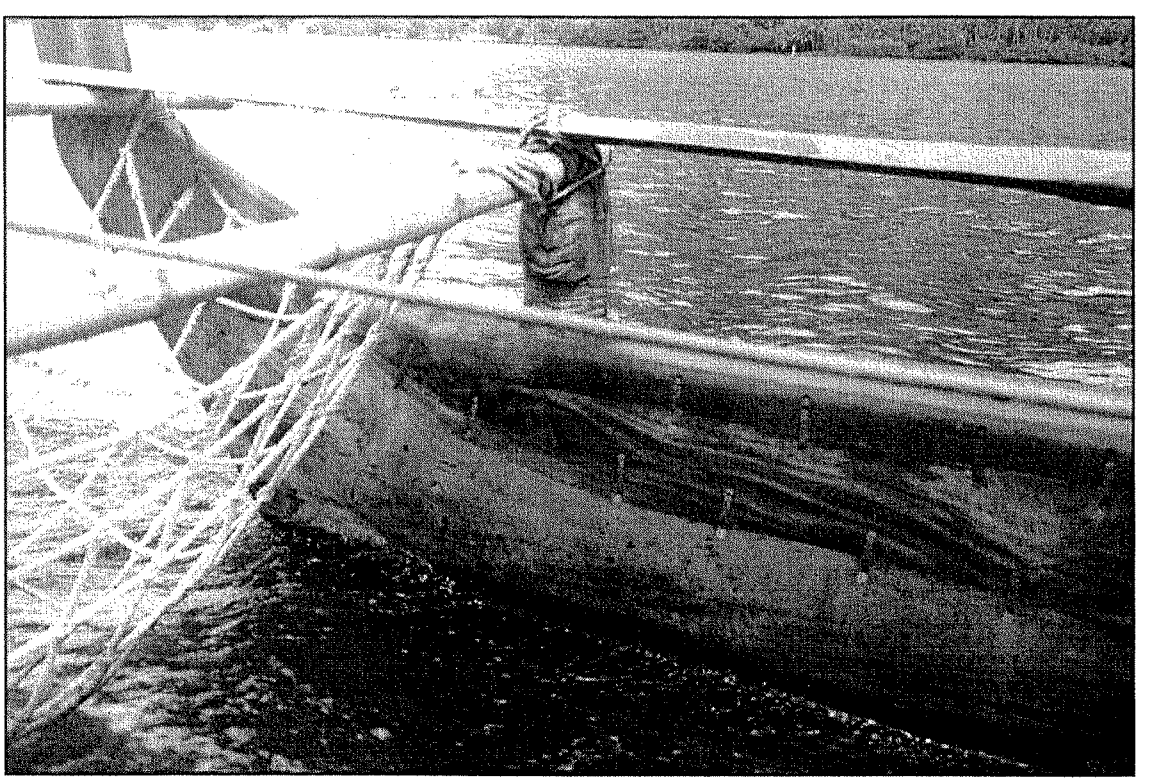

Fig. 2.29. *Performance of Hawaiki Nui's lashed bow during sea trials. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

2.6.2.3 *Final difficulties*

In early 1985, after the canoe had completed its basic sea trials and was moored in Baie de Cook (Cook's Bay), Moorea, the project ran out of funding again.

> The New Zealand helpers including Ace [Cuthers] were forced to return home. Matahi was left alone to continue working, refining and modifying. (pers. comm. Hicks)

But despite the lack of funds and the additional psychological strains of the severe negative publicity at the time (see 2.8.2 this thesis), Whakataka-Brightwell refused to give in. Instead he continued work, refining *Hawaiki Nui*'s design, such as strengthening the rig and improving the steering system (pers. comm. Hicks).

In the meantime, Cowan attempted to secure sufficient funds for the final completion and voyage. The diplomatic side of the project was his sole responsibility. The project's eventual success was largely dependent on Cowan's great efforts and expertise when negotiating with the Tahitian authorities. Tirelessly pursuing this avenue, he organised the funds and support over the years, as well as successfully navigating through, what Margaret Hicks (pers. comm.) has aptly called "the minefield of French sailing regulations". Hicks remembers all these pressures eventually taking their toll on Francis Cowan in 1985, after he had almost financially ruined himself and his company for *Hawaiki Nui*.

> . . . Francis was frantically negotiating with OTAC for additional funding. He had neglected his own business [the shipping company "Cowan et Fils"] to such an extent that eventually the directors decided to replace him with his nephew . . . . (pers. comm. Hicks)

At this difficult time, external circumstances finally began to work in their favour. As Hicks recalls,

> The South Pacific Festival of Arts due to be held in New Caledonia was transferred at short notice to Tahiti (on account of political instability). OTAC decided *Hawaiki Nui* would make an excellent feature so more funding was made available. (pers. comm. Hicks)

With the financial backing finally secured, the last hurdle could now be taken. The green light for sailing had to be given by the Tahitian authorities. After witnessing the problems *Hawaiki Nui* encountered on her first leg from Tahiti to Moorea, they doubted the capabilities of the canoe and crew (Evans 1998: 105). Subsequently a civil architect was sent over to check "the

canoe's capabilities" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 15) and to assess their "sailing ability on the leg between Moorea and Ra'iatea" (Evans 1998: 105). At last *Hawaiki Nui* was "given permission to sail out of French territory" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 15); without an escort boat, but under the strict condition of taking a safety raft on board (Evans 1998: 102).

2.6.2.4 *Performance and speed*

In Whakataka-Brightwell's opinion, a striking difference between the *waka* in which the ancestors of the Māori migrated to Aotearoa and *Hawaiki Nui* might have been in size.

> For a migration purposes [sic] . . . we estimated that a canoe would have needed to have been twice as big as ours: our twenty-two metre double-hulled canoe, fully loaded with provisions, couldn't carry any more than five people. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 14)

From Whakataka-Brightwell's experience, "[t]hese vessels [Polynesian double-hulled voyaging *waka*] were capable of speeds up to fourteen knots and could cover up to 150 miles a day" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 11). According to Margaret Hicks, on one occasion *Hawaiki Nui* covered 219 miles in 33 hours at an average speed of 6.6 knots. Hicks comments "this is good considering her small rig". But "most of the time she [*Hawaiki Nui*] only averaged three knots and sometimes less". Hicks remembers *Hawaiki Nui* having considerable difficulties going to windward and comments that "*Hawaiki Nui* could only sail efficiently with the wind aft of the beam (running and reaching)". A really strong wind was needed for the vessel to average five to six knots. Consequently, in light winds she made only slight progress. (pers. comm. Hicks)

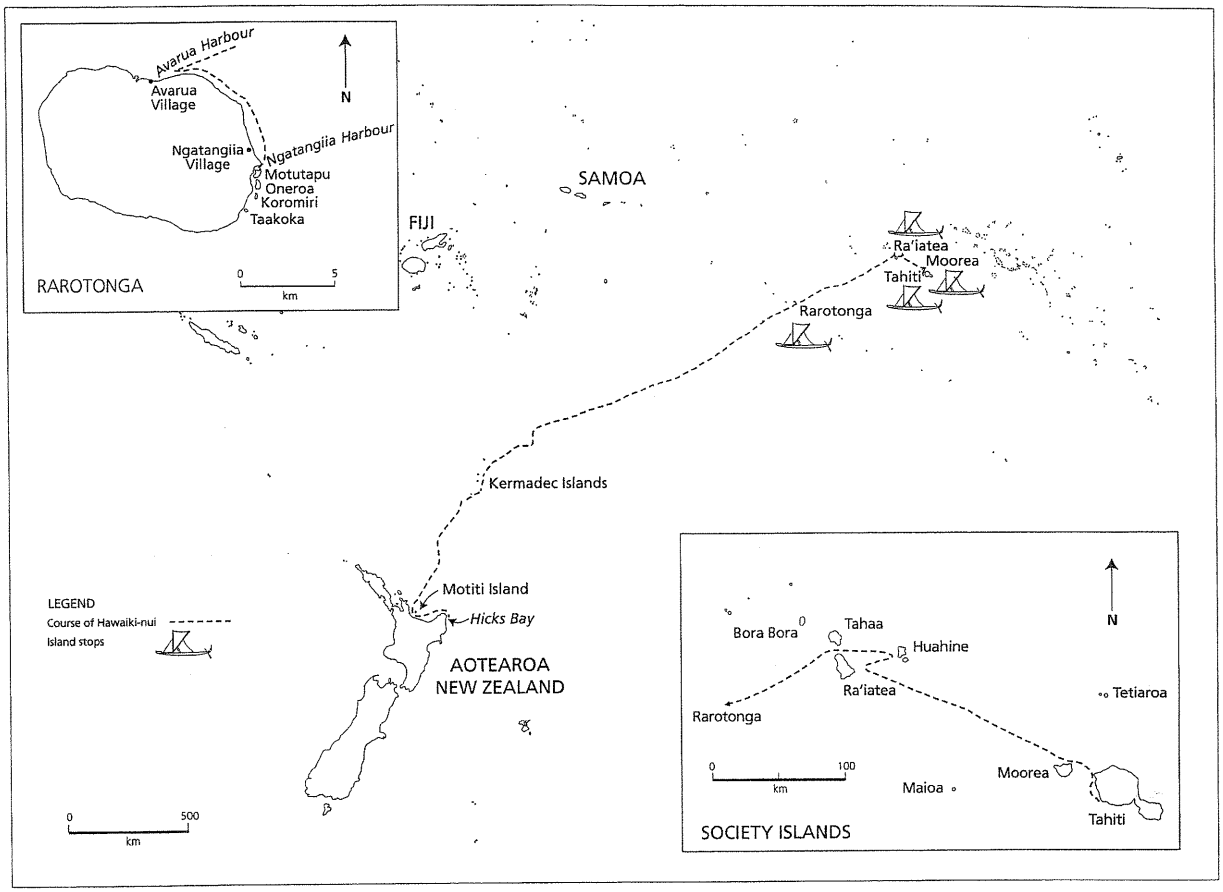

Fig. 2.30. *28 October - 31 December 1985: Hawaiki Nui's voyage. (Evans 1998: 109)*

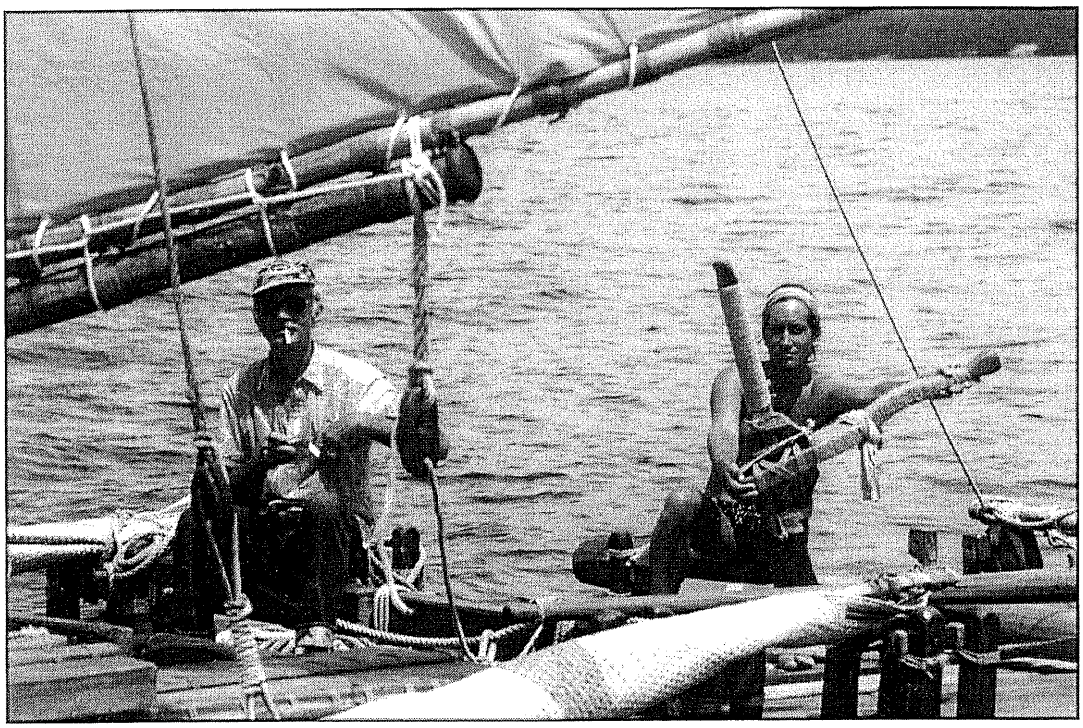

Fig. 2.31. *On their way to Moorea: Cowan and Whakataka-Brightwell (steering). (Note the rolled up pandanus sail in the foreground.) (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

2.7 1985: *Hawaiki Nui*'s Voyage to Aotearoa

2.7.1 Introduction

The existing accounts of *Hawaiki Nui*'s voyage, published (Nelson 1991, Evans 1998, Whakataka-Brightwell 1994, *PWMS 1996*) and unpublished (Taonui 1994), sometimes contradict each other in significant matters (such as the number of days it took for a leg of the voyage), or leave out relevant information (such as having a stop-over on an island).[100] The repeated encounter with contradictory or patchy information led me to restudy every single one of these accounts in detail, and to compare the individual accounts with each other, with the aim of identifying the inaccuracies.

Whakataka-Brightwell's own accounts (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994; *PWMS 1996*: 95 - 101) mention very little detail about the track and timeline of the voyage,[101] forcing me to mainly rely on secondary sources for these two central points. Here, Evans (1998) is still the most detailed and most complete account available. My analysis and comparisons of Evans (1998), Nelson (1991), Taonui (1994), as well as Whakataka-Brightwell's comments at the *Waka Moana Symposium* (*PWMS 1996*) reveal that Evans (1998) did not contain as many internal contradictions and uncertainties in respect to time and place, such as sometimes exist in Nelson (1991) and Taonui (1994). When compared to Evans (1998), I found Nelson's (1991) account contradictory in a number of points. Earlier this year (March 2000), my findings were confirmed by Hicks (pers. comm.), who seriously questions the reliability of Nelson (1991) as a source.[102] These inaccuracies affected Taonui's (1994) account, which used Nelson (1991) as

[100] Or the account is so brief, that it lacks details about the voyage altogether (such as, for example, the dates and exact route concerned; see, for instance, Finney 1994b: 64f.).

[101] At the *Waka Moana Symposium*, James Wharram questioned Whakataka-Brightwell about the exact speed of the *waka*, asking him how long it took *Hawaiki Nui* to get from Tahiti to Aotearoa. Whakataka-Brightwell answered, "I know we left, I think it was 17th November and we arrived off Mayor Island [Bay of Plenty] on 20th December I think" (*PWMS 1996*: 99). [Based on Whakataka-Brightwell's statement, Wharram worked out that their speed must have been "about 8-10 knots" (*PWMS 1996*: 99).] Whakataka-Brightwell was unsure about the exact dates of the voyage. Obviously, he did not prioritise this kind of information, which perhaps could explain to some degree the confusion of places and timeframes in the different accounts. In this case, for example, during Whakataka-Brightwell's presentation at the Symposium (*PWMS 1996*: 95 - 101), it was apparently of much more relevance to him to explain the significance of *whakapapa* (in relation to the *Hawaiki Nui* project), while the European audience appeared to be mostly interested in facts about the actual performance of the *waka*.

[102] After I completed my final draft in April 2000, Margaret Hicks (pers. comm.) strongly confirmed my caution concerning Nelson (1991) as a source. In Hicks' opinion, Nelson's account is "completely erroneous".

its main source for the points in question. I therefore decided to base the account of *Hawaiki Nui*'s voyage presented in this chapter on Whakataka-Brightwell (1994) and Evans (1998), while alluding to contrasting information given in Nelson (1991) and Taonui (1994) through footnotes. The following account is as detailed and clear as the available written sources allow me to be. My principal aim is to establish basic (and hence important) details about the timeframe, route and stop-overs of the voyage (see Fig. 2.30), as well as providing information on culturally significant events and routines during the voyage.

2.7.2 Life On Board

2.7.2.1 *The crew*

Besides Whakataka-Brightwell from Aotearoa, and Francis Cowan from Tahiti, the selected crew consisted of Alex Roper from London, England; Greg Terepai ('Ace') Cuthers from Mangaia, the Cook Islands; and Rodo Parau[103] from Rurutu, the Austral Islands (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 20). Whakataka-Brightwell remembers the selection process.

> Because the pressures and responsibilities were going to be so great [during *Hawaiki Nui*'s voyage], Francis would ask anyone who wanted to sail with us to help him lash. After half an hour he would more often than not kick them out because their concentration and discipline wasn't good enough. His argument was that if someone can't put a piece of chicken wire on the end of a lashing rope so that we can thread it through the lashing hole, how's he going to be on the open sea? Francis was going through between three and six people a month. . . . We went through hundreds of helpers. (Evans 1998: 97)

Cowan, acknowledged by Whakataka-Brightwell as "the last of the long line of traditional canoe builders and navigators" (*PWMS 1996*: 95),[104] was the captain and principal navigator during the voyage. His long-time sailing friend Alex Roper was also a navigator, but using modern methods, Roper's sole job was to independently monitor the canoe's progress (see 2.7.3.5 this

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For example, important details, such as the date of departure (Nelson cites 31 October as the departure date from Tahiti instead of 28 October, see 2.7.3.1 this thesis) as well as details about the constellations used for the non-instrumental navigation (such as the use of Scorpio) are incorrect. In short, as Hicks puts it, Nelson (1991) presents "a re-invention of the voyage and bears little or no resemblance to reality" (pers. comm. Hicks). Shortly after the publication of *Nga Waka Maori* in 1991 Hicks wrote a letter to the publishers, in which she pointed out numerous mistakes and requested the withdrawal of the book from the market.

[103] Rodo Parau was nominated by OTAC as their representative on board (pers. comm. Hicks).

[104] I assume that this statement is meant to refer to Tahiti only, as there are still traditional canoe builders and navigators alive in other parts of the Pacific, such as Mau Piailug (widely recognised through his services for the Polynesian Voyaging Society [PVS]) from the Caroline Islands in Micronesia (see 5.3.1 and 6.5.3 this thesis).

thesis). Roper, Parau, Cuthers and Whakataka-Brightwell also took turns as steersmen and hence shared the responsibility of keeping the *waka* on the assigned track. Whakataka-Brightwell regarded "the maintenance of the canoe" as his "main responsibility" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 20). Roper started off as the cook of the voyage but "it was not a success" so Cuthers took over the cooking job (pers. comm. Hicks). Parau, a "proficient harpoonist", was the fisherman on board (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 20), a task also shared by Cuthers and Roper (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 14; 20).

2.7.2.2 *Fishing*

Fresh fish supplemented the crew's diet on sea whenever possible. Whakataka-Brightwell remembers that "[i]n the end we only just had enough food for the voyage, because we had been counting on some fresh fish being caught along the way" (Evans 1998: 115f.). Most of the fishing was done with "a long trawl line" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 20). Parau "made his own lures during the voyage from the dried skin of fish caught along the way. After adding tassels to the dried skin and lashing it to a hook, he had a big-fish catcher every time" (Evans 1998: 110f.). Overall the crew's fishing-endeavours were much more successful on the eleven-day leg from Ra'iatea to Rarotonga, compared to the subsequent twenty-two-day leg to Aotearoa. On the voyage to the Cook Islands, Parau "managed to catch a tuna every second day and a mahimahi every third day" (Evans 1998: 110), while on the final leg into the colder Southern latitudes, they were having "such a hard time catching fish to supplement ... [their] food stores" that a crew-member eventually decided to catch one of the sharks following the canoe instead (Evans 1998: 116; cf. Whakataka-Brightwell 1994).

2.7.2.3 *Routine on Board*

The watch routine on board was "six hours on, six hours off, and Francis called the shifts" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 20). But with difficult weather approaching, indicated by "big black clouds and high winds coming", Cowan would call all hands on deck "to batten down" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 20). For safety reasons, the steersman on duty had to wear a safety harness "at all times" (Evans 1998: 106, 107).

2.7.2.4 *Meals*

The canoe was stable enough so that the meals could usually be taken "out on the open deck without any problems" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 20). Their meals consisted of "a light snack" in the mornings, and "one main meal of the day, at about six o'clock, which . . . [they] always ate together" (Evans 1998: 115). The cooking was done with "a cooking box made up with galvanised plates", which was located inside the cabin (Evans 1998: 105).[105]

An important responsibility associated with the meals had to be conducted each night. As the provisions (food and water) were stored inside both of the hulls, the crew had to make sure that they were still evenly distributed after each main meal. An uneven distribution between the hulls would have upset the balance of the canoe, causing the *waka* "to pull to the heavy side" (Evans 1998: 115). Hence, a redistribution was necessary "on a regular basis to keep a good balance" (Evans 1998: 115).

2.7.2.5 *Provisions*

Water was the "biggest load", as they calculated two litres per person per day (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 14).[106] The food they carried for the first major part of their voyage (from Tahiti to Rarotonga) was "mainly taro, ta'rua (from the taro family), kūmara, and fresh and dried fruit" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 14). Leaving Rarotonga (after a two-week break) they stored "enough water for thirty-six days" and also generous amounts of "coconuts, wild honey, dried bananas, green bananas, tomatoes, pawpaws, and other fruit from the island" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 22) donated to them by the Islanders. Furthermore, during the voyage they supplemented their supply of drinking water by fresh rainwater, which was more than abundant on their way to Aotearoa.[107] Whakataka-Brightwell explains, that "[e]very time it rained we had a water brigade and caught as much of the water that ran down the sails as possible" (Evans 1998: 114). It appears that an attempt was made to provision *Hawaiki Nui* with fresh and

[105] Elsewhere, Whakataka-Brightwell (1994: 20) describes the cooking device they had on board as "a little portable gas cooker which we used for one hot meal a day."
[106] In Evans (1998: 116), Whakataka-Brightwell remarks that "from memory, we were allocated only about 1.5 litres of water each, per day."
[107] Out of 22 days, Whakataka-Brightwell reports that they only had about three days without rain (Evans 1998: 114).

traditionally preserved foods, but at least some 20th century provisions, such as tinned food and crackers, were kept on board.[108]

2.7.2.6 *Modern utensils*

> Besides a radio (which broke down), the only modern thing we carried with us was a little portable gas cooker which we used for one hot meal a day. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 20)[109]

According to M. J. Norman (1995: 130-131), other modern equipment on board *Hawaiki Nui* included a "liferaft, emergency radio beacon, [and] a spare set of canvas sails".

2.7.3 The voyage

2.7.3.1 *Tahiti to Moorea*

Hawaiki Nui left Tahiti on 28 October, 1985 (Evans 1998: 105).[110] This first leg (Fig. 2.31) was experienced as quite an embarrassment by the crew. Whakataka-Brightwell describes the events as follows:

> We had the whole nation watching us leave Tahiti to sail to Moorea – and one of our halyards got stuck in the block. And then the boom twisted so we couldn't pull the main sail up. We sat there for about three hours. In the end Francis rigged up a head sail and we managed to crawl to Paopao Harbour in Moorea. It took us about 8 hours to complete a 40-minute trip. That first leg to Moorea was a complete failure. (Evans 1998: 105)

[108] Whakataka-Brightwell reported that "Christmas dinner [a day after sighting Great Barrier Island] consisted of a six-pack of water, four tins of corned beef, three tins of baked beans, and some cracker biscuits" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 23), but makes no reference elsewhere to the origin of these modern supplies. To my knowledge, during *Hawaiki Nui*'s chance encounter with the *Tiare Moana* between the Cook Islands and Aotearoa (six days after they left Rarotonga; see Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 22), the crew from the cargo ship threw over some tinned food (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell 1990). Perhaps this was the origin of the modern provisions on board the *waka* described above.

[109] In contrast, in Evans (1998: 105) Whakataka-Brightwell describes their cooking device as "a cooking box made up with galvanised plates," and mentions the difficulties they encountered when trying to fit it through the "cabin's doorway" during their stopover in Moorea. They postponed the sail to Ra'iatea "for two days" while Whakataka-Brightwell had to construct a smaller cooking box (Evans 1998: 105).

[110] In contrast, the date of departure given in Nelson (1991: 15) is 31 October 1985, "at a time when the poi-rata [a kind of pohutukawa] bloomed in Tahiti and on the new moon, which also marked the departure date from Rarotonga and arrival off Motiti Island (near Maketu and Tauranga Harbours)."

2.7.3.2 *Moorea to Ra'iatea*

After a three day stay in Moorea, during which Whakataka-Brightwell crafted a smaller cooking box to fit through the cabin's doorway, the *waka* set off for its second leg (Evans 1998: 105f.) (Fig. 2.32). Because of the problems encountered on their very first leg, the demoralised crew now had to prove "the canoe's capabilities" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 15) and their "sailing ability on the leg between Moorea and Ra'iatea," before the Tahitian government would give them permission to "leave French territorial waters" (Evans 1998: 105). It was a calm day when they departed from Paopao Harbour (Moorea) in the early afternoon (at about 1:30pm), so calm that they subsequently "sat in the channel waiting for the wind to come up" until just after midnight (Evans 1998: 106). Cowan, the expert of the area, predicted the arrival of a cool "local wind from the mountains, the hupe (as it is known to the locals)" in the early morning hour (between 1am and 2am), which finally enabled the *Hawaiki Nui* to leave the shelter of the island (Evans 1998: 106). They immediately "hit winds of about 30 knots", the strongest winds *Hawaiki Nui* had so far been exposed to. Whakataka-Brightwell recalls the *waka* taking off "like a rocket", and the crew had difficulties controlling the vessel because she was running "at full speed" (Evans 1998: 106). This time around, they "sailed without mishap through until the next evening, when . . . [they] arrived of Ra'iatea lagoon about 5:30[pm]" (Evans 1998: 107). Rough conditions led them to postpone the difficult landfall until daylight, and they sailed into the Huahine Channel (between Huahine and Ra'iatea Island) to spent the night at a safe distance from the reef (Evans 1998: 107). Hicks remembers, "[w]e all wondered what had happened to them as it is usually an overnight sail to Ra'iatea" (pers. comm. Hicks). As weather conditions subsequently worsened into a storm, this became another test for the *waka* and its crew. Whakataka-Brightwell describes the events as follows:

> While we were out there [Huahine Channel], the waves steadily grew in height. We estimated that at their peak the waves were about 4.5 m high, and Francis made us sit there with no anchor to see how the canoe would ride the waves. As it turned out, Hawaiki-nui rode up the waves smoothly and slid down the other side with the same style. . . . [T]he canoe weathered the storm and by morning the winds had died down enough to let us sail into the harbour.
>
> When the authorities saw us sailing into Uturoa Harbour unassisted and under sail they finally believed in our ability. Uturoa pass is notorious because of the cross-current and cross-break of the tides.
> . . . Hawaiki-nui had arrived safely and without assistance, and we were elated. All those hard years melted away when we sailed into the lagoon using finger-tip steering right up to the wharf and the welcoming party. (Evans 1998: 107)

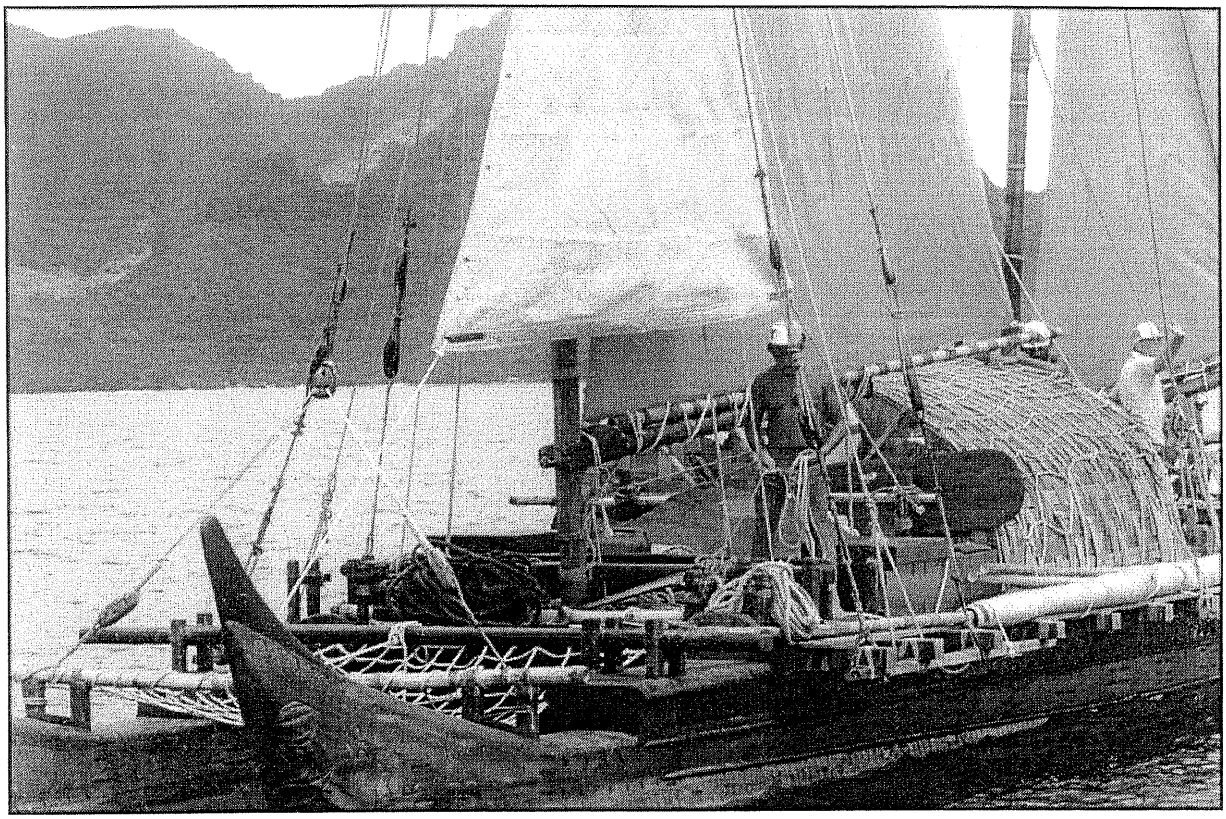

Fig. 2.32. *31 October 1985: Sailing from Moorea to Ra'iatea. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

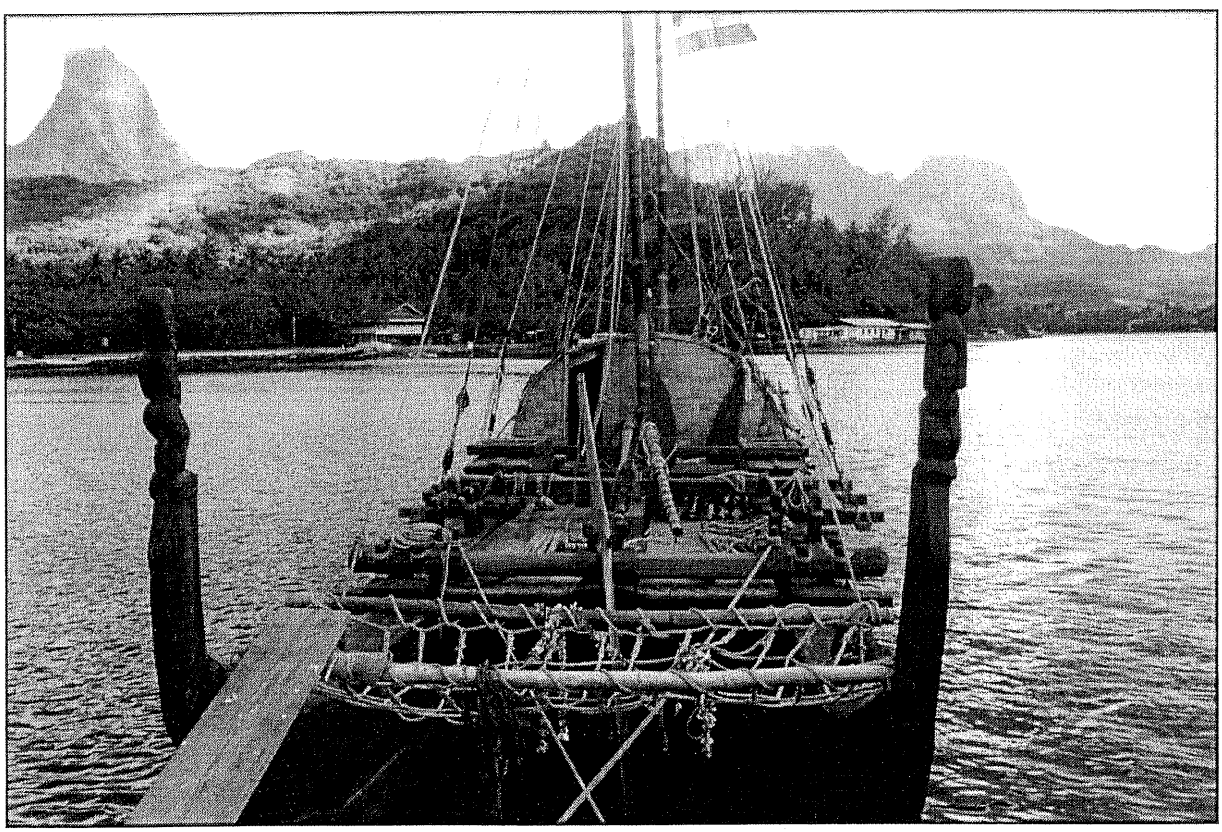

Fig. 2.33. *Ra'iatea Island, 3 November 1985: Hawaiki Nui moored at Mirimiri Harbour. (Photograph courtesy of Whakataka-Brightwell)*

The following ceremony signified the success of *Hawaiki Nui* and her crew in overcoming the first challenge of the voyage. After "the usual dances, photo shots and speeches", they were welcomed by Tahitian officials (such as "the president of French Polynesia, Gaston Flosse, and several of his ministers, the mayor of Uturoa, and several other officials from Ra'iatea" [Evans 1998: 107f.]). The crew learned that *Hawaiki Nui* was "one of the few vessels that have been able to sail unassisted from the open ocean through the lagoon pass into Uturoa Harbour – an early accolade for Hawaiki-nui" (Evans 1998: 108).[111]

On the next day, keeping to the traditional agenda of their voyage, they sailed *Hawaiki Nui* around the island of Ra'iatea to Mirimiri (Fig. 2.33), which is locally known as "the traditional departure point for Rarotonga when sailing from Ra'iatea" (Evans 1998: 108). There they stayed for a couple of days to do a final check-up of the *waka*, to re-provision stores and relash the boom (Evans 1998: 108).

2.7.3.3 *Ra'iatea to Rarotonga*

Traditionally voyagers left on a good day and were not bound to a timetable. But as contemporary voyagers, *Hawaiki Nui*'s crew had to deal with modern pressures from the media and sponsors. So instead of leaving when the conditions were right, *Hawaiki Nui* left when the public expected her to. After the final farewells, Hicks and a German friend towed the voyaging canoe into the channel because of adverse conditions. (pers. comm. Hicks) Once in the channel they raised their sails and left (Evans 1998: 108). It took *Hawaiki Nui* eleven days to reach Rarotonga. Whakataka-Brightwell remembers, that

> Most of the eleven days it took to get to Rarotonga were days of cyclonic weather: a south-east swell coming from the Antarctic and beam-on all the way. I had to watch certain parts of the canoe which could be damaged. I was also responsible for bailing the canoe out. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 20)

The conditions *Hawaiki Nui* and her crew had to deal with were extremely threatening at times. Whakataka-Brightwell recalls,

[111] According to Whakataka-Brightwell, "[t]he two coral heads [at the reef entrance to Uturoa Harbour] are a bit apart – they're not quite in line, one forward and one back, and the waves criss-cross. It's regarded as a very dangerous pass" (Evans 1998: 107).

> On the third day out from Ra'iatea we got caught in a nasty squall, which soon developed into a gale. The seas were monstrous and the winds ferocious. Francis estimated that they got up to about 80 knots at one stage. The winds were so strong that they eventually broke our main mast. In the confusion that followed, Francis's experience and calmness under pressure came to the fore again and saved the day. He knew exactly what to do. He ordered our sea anchor to be put out and had me bring in the steering paddles and rudder to ensure that they didn't get broken or lost in the huge seas. Then he supervised the hauling in of the mast. All the while his calmness helped the rest of us stay composed.
> When we were able to have a close look at the damage, we discovered that the front stays that held the mast up had worn and broken under the stress from the storm. It took us 36 hours to set up an effective jury rig and get going again. The repairs reduced the height of the mast considerably, and we were very concerned at that stage that the shortened mast wouldn't allow us to sail fast enough to escape the storm. To our great surprise the canoe seemed to sail as fast as it had before the accident. . . . When we finally made Rarotonga we were still in the tail of the gale. (Evans 1998: 111)

According to media reports, *Hawaiki Nui* arrived in the Cook Islands on 15 November 1985 (pers. comm. Hicks). Over the following two weeks the crew had a much needed rest and completed the necessary repairs, such as refitting a new mast from a local bamboo (see Evans 1998: 112). On 29 November (Evans 1998: 114) *Hawaiki Nui* left Rarotonga well prepared for her final leg.

2.7.3.4 *Rarotonga to Aotearoa*

According to Whakataka-Brightwell, "[o]n the 22-day crossing from Rarotonga we had 3 days of fine weather at the most, so we were virtually constantly walking around in wet clothes" (Evans 1998: 114). For the crew it was a demanding leg in terms of physical hardship, as well as in terms of mental hardship for Whakataka-Brightwell himself (see Evans 1998: 114-116).

Before reaching the Kermadec Chain, about a week into the voyage, Cowan ordered the canoe to be heaved to in order to wait for more favourable winds . According to his calculations, *Hawaiki Nui* was being pushed too far to the west. He decided to leave the canoe adrift with the currents. It took about four days before the winds finally became more favourable (Evans 1998: 118).[112] They continued sailing and after passing close by the Kermadec Chain (Evans 1998: 118), they carried on to Aotearoa.

[112] It is interesting to note here, that
> Where *Hōkūle'a* had been fortunate in being at just the right place at the right time to keep sailing southwest with the easterly winds of one high pressure system after another, and was only minimally

The day before Christmas 1985 *Hawaiki Nui*'s crew sighted Great Barrier Island. On Boxing Day (26 December) they found themselves off Tahua Island (Mayor Island), and the following day (27 December), according to Whakataka-Brightwell (Evans 1998: 120; Nelson 1991), off Motiti Island.[113]

In Whakataka-Brightwell's opinion, *Hawaiki Nui*'s crew found itself "in exactly the same position as those first migrants" because the coast they first sighted was new to all of them (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 23).[114] Though Whakataka-Brightwell considered himself as "the local", he was also unfamiliar with the coastline (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 23).

> Two courses of action were open to us. We could try to find our way safely into Tauranga Harbour, or we could continue the journey. But our troubles weren't over: once again, another storm blew up. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 23)

After this, yet another storm subsequently made landfall for *Hawaiki Nui* difficult. After three approaches to the East Cape they finally decided to fix the transmitter on board and to radio Auckland for assistance. Meanwhile Gerald Cowan (Francis Cowan's brother) and the OTAC representative Francis Steim had chartered a plane to look for *Hawaiki Nui* (pers. comm. Hicks). After they called for assistance, the fishing trawler "Kaiti" (Watties) met *Hawaiki Nui* "off the coast" and towed *Hawaiki Nui* into Hicks Bay to a safe harbour (Whakataka-Brightwell 194: 24). *Hawaiki Nui* made landfall at approximately 2.30pm on 31 December 1985 (pers. comm. Hicks). Whakataka-Brightwell comments,

> On the last day of the year, New Year's Eve, 1985, we finally make landfall on the mainland, near where the *Tainui* had done hundreds of years before us. You can imagine our exhilaration. Tacking down the East Coast in these conditions has not only

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> delayed by the calms and a few hours of westerlies, *Hawaiki-Nui* was delayed several times by the calm periods and contrary winds of low pressure troughs. (Finney 1994b: 65)

Hawaiki Nui left Rarotonga shortly after *Hōkūle'a* but was, in comparison, much delayed by adverse weather conditions. Covering the same distance (and furthermore, taking a very similar route from Rarotonga, via the Kermadecs, to Aotearoa [compare Fig. 2.8 in Finney 1994b: 65 to Fig. 2.30 this thesis]) took *Hōkūle'a* 16 days, while *Hawaiki Nui*'s final leg took an additional six days in comparison. This is further evidence for the significance of timing in prehistoric Polynesian voyaging.

[113] In contrast, according to Cowan (in an interview upon *Hawaiki Nui*'s arrival in Hicks Bay), Roper as well as Cuthers (who, after all, was the only one familiar with this particular part of Aotearoa's coast), they sheltered behind Tahua Island and then sailed to Matakana Island. Hence, Whakataka-Brightwell appears to be the only one on board who suggested an arrival at Motiti Island. Cowan, Roper and Cuthers have no recollection of visiting or sailing past Motiti Island. (pers. comm. Hicks)

[114] According to Hicks, Cuthers was familiar with the coastline as he used to fish off this coast (pers. comm. Hicks).

> tested our sailing skills to the limit, but brought home to us the courage and skill of our forebears, who had made this journey completely on their own.
> (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 24)

2.7.3.5 *A note on navigation*

Alex Roper, the second navigator on board, monitored the *waka*'s progress using Western navigational methods.[115] Only if the vessel went too far off course would he inform Francis Cowan. This arrangement was a safety measure agreed to with the French authorities since *Hawaiki Nui* had no escort vessel, and no long range radio or satellite monitoring system (such as ARGOS) on board.[116] (pers. comm. Hicks) According to Roper, who spoke to Hicks about the navigation upon his return to Aotearoa New Zealand, the non-instrumental method worked "surprisingly well" and, without interventions, brought them right to the Coromandel Peninsula. The only problem they encountered during the whole voyage in respect to navigation was, that they did not arrive at the western side of the Coromandel as originally aimed for. Despite making allowances, *Hawaiki Nui* was set too far eastwards (pers. comm. Hicks).[117]

2.8 The Cultural Significance of Hawaiki Nui

For three key reasons, I believe *Hawaiki Nui* has a special historic significance for Māori culture and the Pacific-wide revival in voyaging. Firstly, the idea and inspiration for this voyaging canoe project developed within the Māori world. In Whakataka-Brightwell's own words (*PWMS 1996*: 97), *"Hawaiki Nui* is the expression of Maori traditional knowledge". Secondly, *Hawaiki Nui* is the earliest example of the revival of double-hulled voyaging in Aotearoa this century and the first voyaging *waka* on record built (at least partly) in Aotearoa

[115] In contrast, Taonui (1994: 169, 172) erroneously claims that *Hawaiki Nui*'s voyage was "the only voyage from the 1960s-1990s period upon which an independent safety check on the course was not kept."

[116] For safety as well as research reasons, the voyaging tracks of contemporary replicas of Polynesian voyaging *waka* (and/or other experimental voyages to trial non-instrumental navigation methods) are in most cases monitored with modern Western devices, such as GPS. This usually takes place from the accompanying support vessel, or, as in the case of David Lewis' research (see Lewis 1994) as well as *Hawaiki Nui*, on board the same vessel.

[117] Due to unsolved disparities and severe inconsistencies between my sources (Evans 1998; Whakataka-Brightwell 1990; Nelson 1991; Taonui 1994; pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell; pers. comm. Hicks) about significant details of the traditional methods used to successfully navigate *Hawaiki Nui* from Central Polynesia to Aotearoa New Zealand, I have decided to refrain from commenting on this aspect of the voyage. After discussing this with Margaret Hicks, I feel that it would be absolutely necessary for me to interview Francis Cowan, the navigator himself (who unfortunately was unavailable to me as he lives in Tahiti), in order to be able to make informed choices and to be able to comment on the available disparate and patchy material.

for at least 350 years.[118] Finney (1994b: 65) remarked, that "*Hawaiki-Nui* reached Aotearoa to make it, in a sense, the first Maori canoe to come home from overseas for many centuries". In the wider Pacific context, according to Francis Cowan, *Hawaiki Nui* "was the only double canoe built by traditional techniques and materials" at this time (Cowan 1998: 8).[119] The voyage, as defined by Whakataka-Brightwell, aimed "to duplicate as closely as possible the sailing conditions experienced by our [Polynesian] ancestors" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 23). Hence, in Whakataka-Brightwell's opinion, the success of their voyage "provided evidence for the truth of the traditional stories of our culture" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 23). In retrospect Whakataka-Brightwell is very confident about their achievement, remarking that "[h]aving crossed 2000 miles of the Pacific Ocean, and endured many hardships on the way, we [the crew] feel we know all there is to know about the perils of the ocean" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 2). *Hawaiki Nui*'s course was solely determined by traditional Polynesian non-instrumental navigation methods. It is interesting to note that (coming from Central Polynesia using non-instrumental navigation) *Hawaiki Nui* eventually arrived in the Bay of Plenty region, traditionally known as the point of arrival for many Māori migration *waka*.[120] This is important information - not only for any current and future Māori (and Polynesian)

[118] The double canoes recorded by Tasman (1642), and later Cook and his contemporaries, as well as during the early colonisation phase (the last ones were recorded in the South Island and disappeared by the middle of the 19th century), were suited to coastal voyaging and deep-sea fishing, but do not appear to have been the type suitable for long-distance voyaging. (cf. Haddon & Hornell 1975; Best 1976; Nelson 1991) Often these double-hulled *waka* were only temporarily joined to serve a specific purpose, requiring more stability (i.e. for rough seas such as around South Island Coasts) and/or a larger carrying capacity than attainable by the large single-hull canoes of the Māori. (see Best 1976; see also 1.7.2 this thesis)

[119] Though Cowan (1998: 8) here uses "double canoe", the context of his statement implies that he means a double canoe specifically for offshore sailing. Otherwise his comment could perhaps be challenged, as many of the more remote Pacific islands and archipelagos continue building and utilising traditional watercraft for interisland and/or interarchipelago travel despite the introduction of Western boat technology, which may also include the use of double-hulled vessels. Though the outrigger canoe is much more common in the contemporary Pacific than the double-hull, and the use of the latter would therefore be an exception, the "double canoe" is still a possibility which cannot be ignored. This is especially so, since the last extensive survey of extant "canoes in Oceania" was undertaken almost 80 years ago (see Haddon and Hornell 1978). In conclusion, while I am personally unaware of any contemporary examples of traditionally constructed double-hulls sailing the Pacific (except for the present context of voyaging revival, e.g. *Hawai'iloa*), I argue that the existence of such a canoe, built in a traditional manner and from traditional materials, cannot be excluded with absolute certainty. For example, in 1931, the Ngāti-Kopati from Mitiaro in the Cook Islands gifted their traditionally built double canoe *Tapuakaira* to the Museum in Wellington (now in storage at the Te Papa Museum). This particular vessel had been built around 1823 and currently discussions are being undertaken with the local Mitiaro community in Wellington, to restore the canoe. (pers. comm. Dr. Richard Walter)

[120] As Sullivan (1985: 53) remarked,

> A number of Maori origin traditions which give precise landfalls for the arrival of voyaging canoes from Hawaiki put them in the East Cape-Bay of Plenty area of the North Island. Whangaparaoa near East Cape is usually named as the first landfall. The East Cape region, which juts out considerably to the northeast, is in fact a likely arrival zone for navigated voyaging from a southwesterly course from East Polynesia, though any point on the eastern coastline of the North or the South Island is theoretically possible.

waka projects, but also for contemporary Māori society, as many actively engage in asserting their distinctive cultural identity.

Constructing a traditional voyaging *waka* is not only an incredible technical challenge for Māori (and Polynesians) today, it is a culturally and spiritually significant endeavour. Constructing a traditional voyaging *waka*, as I will argue, can also be a strong political statement (in a neo-colonial context). Whakataka-Brightwell's dedication to the revival of *waka* in Aotearoa (not only double-hulled voyaging, but also *waka ama* and most recently sailing outriggers) appears to be deeply motivated by a desire to create a powerful Māori antidote to the disillusionment and frustration experienced by a young Māori generation which is engulfed in a dominant Pākehā society with Pākehā values and Pākehā ways of doing things.

> I would sit beside Hawaikinui next to my father's tipuna photograph, my mind, my spirit embraced in the beauty of our canoe – the hull adze cuts, the family-tree sculpture, the scent of wood, the fibre rope lashing - searching the Maori horizon for a solution to ancestral landlessness, the lack of culture and language, the poor health and unemployment of my tribe. (Whakataka-Brightwell cited in Nelson 1991: 15)

The dedication of *Hawaiki Nui*'s Māori builder, the *kaiwhakairo* ("traditional Māori carver" [Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 3]) Greg Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell (later joined by the Tahitian expert Francis Cowan), to use traditional materials and traditional techniques goes some way to showing his exceptional commitment to Māori traditions and culture. The intricately carved adornments along *Hawaiki Nui*'s mid-gunnels, the carvings on its *tauiho* (prow) as well as its its *taurapa* (sternpost), visually illustrate the story of a deeply felt cultural voyage into a traditional Māori past. Whakataka-Brightwell and his helpers spent a full five years hand-adzing the hulls, constructing the *waka*'s upper body, and lashing, caulking and pegging each individual piece together. Only rarely, when exceptional circumstances forced him, did he retreat to the use of modern power tools. Furthermore, other than the use of epoxy resin as an adhesive (and perhaps also the paint and anti-fouling agent used later on in Tahiti), the *waka* is solely constructed from traditional materials:[121] *tōtara* from Aotearoa; traditional

[121] Taonui (1994: 172; my emphasis) erroneously claims that *Hawaiki Nui* was the "only one [canoe of the modern Polynesian renaissance] constructed *entirely from natural, and by all accounts historically accurate, materials*," and justifies his statement in an adjoining footnote, suggesting the reader compare Whakataka-Brightwell (1994) to Best (1976) and Haddon & Hornell (1936; in this thesis 1978) (Taonui 1994: 172). Taonui's source (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994) is rather brief, and hence contains very little information on the materials used for the construction of *Hawaiki Nui*. Furthermore Taonui obviously failed to address this question during discussions he had with Whakataka-Brightwell (Taonui 1994: 357). As a result his conclusion

Tahitian woods, such as *uru* (breadfruit tree), bamboo and *mara*; and the locally imported *fallacata*,[122] as well as using pandanus and coconut sennit. Peter McCurdy, formerly curator of the National Maritime Museum, had the chance to admire the result in 1985. "[T]he beautiful craftsmanship of the waka itself" left a lasting impression on him (*PWMS 1996*: 101). He remembers

> spending hours poring over it, when it was beached at Okahu Bay, just looking at the lashings and the way the hulls were plugged and the way the craft was put together. I think that has been an inspiration to not just Maori and Polynesian voyaging but all of us in this country. (*PWMS 1996*: 101)

2.8.1 *Whakapapa*

In 1996, Whakataka-Brightwell (*PWMS 1996*: 97) stated, that

> Hawaiki Nui is the expression of Maori traditional knowledge, through oral tradition, and the only way that [this traditional knowledge] lives is through genealogy.

During the three years of his carving training, Whakataka-Brightwell learned his *whakapapa* from his great-uncle Heta Gilbert. Eventually, "[t]he time came to name the hulls which were traditionally called after an ancestor" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 8). Following the advice of another great-uncle, Arohanui Gilbert (Evans 1998: 80), and "with the permission of . . . [his] great-uncles and aunts" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 8), Whakataka-Brightwell named the two hulls of *Hawaiki Nui* after his great-grandparents from Otaki (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 8). The carvings on the mid-gunnels illustrate their *whakapapa* (Ngāti Raukawa, Te Arawa, Tūwharetoa [Whakataka-Brightwell 1987: n.p.]); "the male hull" representing Whareahuru Gilbert, and "the female hull" his great-grandmother Purewa Tahiwi (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 8).

> For the naming ceremony, we gathered at Otaki in the Ngati Raukawa church, Rangiatea, named for the island of Raiatea in the Society Islands which, tradition has it, was originally called Havaiki. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 8)

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is based on incomplete facts.

[122] In the strict sense, *fallacata* does not qualify as 'traditional' Tahitian material for the simple reason that it is locally imported. To my present knowledge, this particular type of wood was not available in Central Polynesia in ancient times. But afterall, *fallacata* is a natural material, and in that respect it can qualify as 'traditional' material in the widest sense.

However, *Hawaiki Nui*'s genealogical significance reaches past Aotearoa's shoreline into the heart of central Polynesia and its traditional Polynesian past. Whakataka-Brightwell is "a direct descendant of Hoturoa" (the captain of the historic *Tainui waka*), and therefore, in his own words, "the canoe of *Hawaiki-Nui* celebrates the traditions of Te Arawa and Tainui" (*PWMS 1996*: 97). Furthermore, the Tahitians in Papara told Whakataka-Brightwell on his arrival in 1981, that they as well were linked to him and his *iwi* through *whakapapa*:

> Papara is said to be the place of origin of the *Nukutere*[123] canoe. When we first arrived in Papara, the Tahitians there told us they were descendants of Hoturoa, and therefore part of the Tainui tradition. It was a happy coincidence.
> (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12)

It appears that from a wider (and traditional) Polynesian viewpoint, *Hawaiki Nui*'s significance lies not so much in its physical features (which usually captures the most interest from a Western viewpoint), but rather in the pan-Pacific genealogical links which are enhanced through the project. As Whakataka-Brightwell remarks, "some of the Europeans might not understand the genealogical ties that still prevail after all these years, it's still a reality" (*PWMS 1996*: 96f.). For example, Whakataka-Brightwell's marriage to Francis Cowan's daughter Rapoia linked Aotearoa with

> Tahiti, Raiatea and Rarotonga by bloodline, by genealogy, because my wife was traded for my expertise and I said to Frances, 'I'll build this canoe but I'll take your daughter' - and that actually happened. (*PWMS 1996*: 96)

To many contemporary Polynesians the language of *whakapapa*, or genealogy, is still a vital part of everyday life. As a significant cultural element from ancient times, the tradition of contextualising social meaning through *whakapapa*, and hence *waka*, is still shared between many islands in the Pacific today. This is exemplified by the experience of *Hawaiki Nui*'s crew during their stopover in the Cook Islands in 1985. As Whakataka-Brightwell recalls, the local Islanders interpreted the voyage within these traditional terms:

> When we arrived in Rarotonga, the Rarotongans understood the significance of the voyage straight away - not so much the canoe, but the physical reuniting of the islands. The island of Tahiti, the island of Ra'iatea, the island of Rarotonga, and now Aotearoa.

[123] Māori traditions differ about who captained the *Nukutere waka* (Evans 1997: 107), but agree on the place where she made landfall in Aotearoa, which is "the eastern Bay of Plenty at Opape, the then mouth of the Waiaua River" (Evans 1997: 108).

> The Rarotongans told us that through our [Rapoia's and Matahi's] children we had linked all the traditions together. (Evans 1998: 79)

Furthermore, the Rarotongan elders "insisted" that *Hawaiki Nui* was to be taken around to Tangiia Harbour after her arrival (Evans 1998: 111). This harbour is of special traditional significance for Cook Islanders. Whakataka-Brightwell recalls,

> It was a great honour for us as they [the Rarotongan elders] allow very few visiting vessels to land in that particular harbour. A few days before we arrived, the Hawaiian vessel Hokule'a had sailed in. She made an impressive sight sitting tied to the wharf at Avarua.
> By the time we reached Tangiia Harbour there was a huge crowd to welcome us. In true traditional style we ran Hawaiki-nui up on the beach adjacent to Avana Stream and made an offering to the local elders. We had brought kumara (sweet potato) from Tahiti especially for the occasion, and were delighted when they returned the compliment by offering a Rarotongan variety in return. (Evans 1998: 111f.)

The ceremonial exchange of gifts is another culturally significant aspect of the contemporary voyaging revival. This exchange after the *waka*'s arrival reinforces the validity of an ancient Pacific-wide custom and encourages peaceful communication based on shared traditions. Traditionally, the visiting *waka* is also asked to leave a stone behind from the island of its origin.

> Before we left, the Rarotongans insisted that we erect a stone on their sacred marae site at Ngatangiia. It was to stand alongside the stones for Te Arawa, Takitimu and the five other migration canoes that, according to their traditions, left Tangiia Harbour over a thousand years before us for Aotearoa. It was a huge honour for Hawaiki-nui, and truly an emotional ceremony for us all. (Evans 1998: 113)

In 1981, a significant impulse for Māori to gift the hulls to Francis Cowan derived from acknowledging his *whakapapa*. The importance of Cowan as a descendant of the last king of Bora Bora (Evans 1998: 86) becomes especially clear in the late Rua Kaika's reaction to the request formulated in Cowan's letter. Kaika replied to Whakataka-Brightwell with the following words: "'Well, his [Cowan's] dream's older than ours. He has the right bloodlines, so we've got to give the canoe to him.'" (Evans 1998: 86)

By that time the hulls themselves were perceived (by Whakataka-Brightwell himself, his elders and relations) not just as the hulls to a very special canoe; they physically represented their tribal ancestors, and as such they were subsequently treated as a living part of Whakataka-Brightwell's family. To illustrate this point, I quote the following passage (taken from

Whakataka-Brightwell's account of a first meeting between Cowan and the Māori elders concerned).

> He [Cowan] readily agreed [to come to New Zealand to meet with the elders of Whakataka-Brightwell's family], and I organised a meeting with Matenga Baker, Rua Kaika, Kohe Webster and several others of my immediate family. When it came time for the meeting, my grand-uncle Arohanui Gilbert asked Francis straight to his face, 'And who are you that we should give you my parents? You realise these two hulls are named after my parents? And my grand nephew [Greg Whakataka-Brightwell] – we're giving him to you as well.' Francis calmly replied that he was from Ra'iatea, Tahaa and Rarotonga, and said that if he was given the canoe he promised to help us realise the dream of sailing from Tahiti to Aotearoa. My grand-uncle continued: 'You realise our hapu holds the church Rangiatea, and strangely, you come from Ra'iatea. I believe that this coming together has happened because the Maori won't help my grand-nephew. It looks like the circumstances in the universe are bringing these things to happen because there's too much opposition here. . . .' (Evans 1998: 87)

From a Polynesian perspective, *Hawaiki Nui* has in fact *recreated* a traditional pan-Pacific link. While it is a contemporary link, it is nevertheless expressed in the ancient Polynesian language of establishing blood-ties between formerly separated regions by means of voyaging. It is crucial that the dimensions of these genealogical ties, established through *Hawaiki Nui* and Whakataka-Brightwell's link to Francis Cowan, and the marriage to his daughter Rapoia, are recognized by contemporary indigenous island societies.

Another interesting incident occurred in Tahiti's Papara, where *Hawaiki Nui*'s work site was based. In Whakataka-Brightwell's own words,

> The people there [in the outer district of Papara] really adopted me, and they went as far as giving me a Tahitian name – Matahi. I was named after the last warrior the French killed in a rebellion at Ra'iatea in 1893. They gave me his name, and his spirit adopted me. He was a person who refused to be colonised, and I have that concept in me. I don't want to be influenced by another culture. I'd rather immerse myself in my own culture. (Evans 1998: 91f.)

Whakataka-Brightwell's identification with his Tahitian name 'Matahi' is so strong, that he completely adopted it, replacing his Christian name 'Greg'.[124] All these examples confirm my point, that *Hawaiki Nui* has to be understood from within its indigenous cultural context –

[124] For example, see his publications under 'Matahi' Whakataka-Brightwell (1987; 1994). In Taonui (1994: 159-174) he is consistently referred to as 'Matahi', and furthermore, I personally witnessed people addressing him as 'Matahi' over time.

traditional, as well as contemporary. Otherwise significant meanings, such as described above, will easily escape the eye of the Western observer.

To some degree this inter-island link, established through *whakapapa*, is also embodied by the *waka* itself. The hulls are constructed by Māori, from traditional Māori materials and employing Māori techniques in Aotearoa; and the upper structure is built in Tahiti by mostly Tahitian workers,[125] from Tahitian materials and combined Māori-Tahitian methods (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12). The result is a unique *waka*, which incorporates Māori as well as Tahitian elements.

2.8.2 Driving forces and obstacles

The moment the trees were cut and hit the forest floor, Whakataka-Brightwell realised "the enormity of the project" (Evans 1998: 82). In taking on the task of constructing a traditional voyaging canoe, he felt it was his responsibility to "prove physically that Maori traditional knowledge is still intact and can still be applied today" (Evans 1998: 82). It was to be a long time before Whakataka-Brightwell's dream became a reality. From its beginnings in 1979 it took a full six years until *Hawaiki Nui* went on the actual voyage she was built for. In these years it was an ongoing struggle for Whakataka-Brightwell and his supporters, not only financially but also morally.

Whakataka-Brightwell criticises the lack of support for his project in Aotearoa, and remarks, that "[i]n the mid- to late 1970s it wasn't trendy to be Maori, and if you were obviously pushing something that was Maori, it was immediately going to be restricted" (Evans 1998: 87). According to Whakataka-Brightwell "[t]he main delay to starting the project was a total lack of support from Maori" (Evans 1998: 79). And even later on "no one here in Aotearoa would lift a finger" (Evans 1998: 87). In March 1996 (at the *Waka Moana Symposium* in Auckland) Whakataka-Brightwell for the first time publicly mentioned some of the difficulties he had to deal with, caused by New Zealand government officials:

[125] Whakataka-Brightwell and his younger brother Kimihia, who "came over [to Tahiti] and helped for nine months" (Whakataka-Brightwell 1994: 12), are the only Māori who, as far as I am aware, participated in the final construction in Tahiti.

> What was hard for *Hawaiki-Nui*, we didn't have the support of Maoridom or the government, we had to do it separately. It was very difficult, very difficult . . . at one stage the Tahitian authorities received a one-and-a-half metre long fax from the New Zealand Government requesting to remove me out of their territory because I would embarrass the Maori race by attempting the crossing. And that was signed by the present Maori Arts Council, Maori Affairs, Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, to try and discredit this sailing canoe, and this is not public knowledge either but I am, after ten years, prepared to talk about it. (*PWMS 1996*: 97)

In these circumstances, he recalls, that "[t]he decision to name the hulls after my ancestors really kept me going during the many low times I had. I mean, how could I even consider abandoning my own ancestors?" (Evans 1998: 80) His ancestors were also an important motivation for Whakataka-Brightwell in another way:

> There was a strong spiritual influence that drove me to complete Hawaiki-nui. After I lost my grandmother I began to have a recurring vision. We say the Maori spirit always goes back to Hawaiki-nui. In the dream I saw that the spiritual road of my ancestors was broken, and that the only way to repair it so that my ancestors could go back to Hawaiki was to sail the canoe. . . .
> I had that dream every couple of nights during the whole time I was building Hawaiki-nui. The dream seemed so real. Some nights during the actual voyage I could see a crowd of people following us, the spirits of my ancestors - it was beautiful, not threatening at all. They were on the path and they could see it had been repaired, it was not broken any longer. . . .
> After the voyage, that particular dream of my grandmother and ancestors stopped. (Evans 1998: 78)

In Tahiti, Whakataka-Brightwell was also confronted with huge negativity and pessimism towards the completion of *Hawaiki Nui* and her traditional voyage. For example, at a time when "the project ran out of funds and steam" in early 1985 during her sea trials, Hicks recalls public comments in Tahiti to "'better . . . abandon the voyage and put the canoe in a museum' or words to that effect" (pers. comm. Hicks). Nevertheless, Whakataka-Brightwell persevered and continued working on *Hawaiki Nui*. As Hicks comments, "nothing would deter him" (pers. comm. Hicks).

2.8.3 A Faustian dilemma

It is an interesting question why *Hawaiki Nui* has never been widely acknowledged as a Māori achievement, the way *Te Aurere* is today. The building was inspired by Māori, the native *tōtara* trees gifted by Tūhoe and the hulls and gunnels were hand-adzed in Pahiatua and Porirua. Subsequently, a lack of support from Maoridom amongst other reasons meant that the building

was transferred to Tahiti in 1981. There, with the financial assistance from the Tahitian government, *Hawaiki Nui* was finally completed. New Zealand government officials, amongst them Māori officials, tried to prevent the project, contacting the Tahitian officials and requesting them to withdraw their support. Later, after completion of the voyage, it became even clearer that neither *Hawaiki Nui* nor Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell would receive the acknowledgement they deserved from the Māori world.[126]

The tragic finale resulted from a rather Faustian dilemma: Whakataka-Brightwell followed a dream, a dream so strong, it took over his whole life. In hindsight he remarks, "I caused human tragedy, I stepped on people, I pushed people out of the way, I ignored people - just to fulfil my ambition" (Evans 1998: 122). In order to receive the desperately needed financial assistance, Whakataka-Brightwell and Cowan eventually signed over *Hawaiki Nui* "to the French in Tahiti" (Evans 1998: 122). This step enabled them to release the hulls from French customs for the completion of the project. The simple signing of a piece of paper in the long run resulted in Whakataka-Brightwell irreversibly loosing control over his creation. After the voyage he was left with nothing but his memories. Immediately after her arrival, *Hawaiki Nui* was removed from New Zealand soil in early 1986. Officially the *waka* did not belong to Whakataka-Brightwell, nor New Zealand, let alone to Māori any longer.

> . . . [T]he canoe had to be returned to Tahiti after the voyage. Originally it was agreed that Hawaiki-nui would be displayed at OTAC and have a canoe house built for her. I don't know what happened, but the canoe house was never built and the canoe was left to crack and rot in the harsh Tahitian environment.
> We tried to negotiate with the Tahitians to buy Hawaiki-nui back for a display at the Maritime Museum in Auckland . . . but we couldn't come to an agreement. Later, after a number of years of neglect, Hawaiki-nui was cut up and the hulls were used for a new canoe, Tahiti-nui. I still find it very painful to talk about it. (Evans 1998: 122)

Instead of receiving the recognition *Hawaiki Nui* and her voyage so richly deserved, this traditional journey took a tragic turn. In 1994, after leaving the canoe out in the open, exposed to Tahiti's harsh environment over a considerable number of years, the authorities decided to

[126] The only official acknowledgement of his outstanding achievement (besides some media attention at the time) Whakataka-Brightwell has received up to the present day has been "the prestigious Blue Water Medal . . . presented by the then governor-general, Sir Paul Reeves" (Evans 1998: 123) for the Akarana Yacht Club in 1989. Whakataka-Brightwell received this "internationally recognized award . . . [which] has only been awarded eight times since its inception in 1952" (Evans 1998: 124) for "the most meritorious cruise, either coastwise or deep sea" (Royal Akarana Yacht Club rules cited in Evans 1998: 123) four years after the actual voyage had taken place.

"restore" the vessel for the upcoming voyage to Taputapu'atea, Nuku Hiva (Marquesas) and Hawai'i in 1995 (see 6.5, 6.5.1 and 6.5.2 this thesis). In due course, the Tahitians literally destroyed the canoe by sawing off the keel section and constructing a vessel which was never able to sail (pers. comm. Hicks; du Prel 1994: 23). It was a truly heartbreaking end for both Cowan and Whakataka-Brightwell.

Whakataka-Brightwell sacrificed not only a significant period of his life, but also his ancestors, which were more than symbolically represented in the canoe. In that sense the Faustian dilemma is a valid metaphor for Whakataka-Brightwell. Unlike Faust, he might not have signed over his soul to the devil, but he signed over a large part of his soul, embodied in *Hawaiki Nui*, to French bureaucracy. This rendered him powerless to direct or control her future destiny.

2.9 Summary and Outlook

The central theme of chapter two was the life-history of *Hawaiki Nui*, "a hand-built, traditionally built vessel" (*PWMS 1996*: 97), including her destruction, as seen from the perspective of its principal builder, the Māori carver and artist, Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell. My aim was to examine the cultural relevance of *Hawaiki Nui* from a New Zealand Māori perspective that is located within a neo-colonial Pacific nation (rather than from either a Tahitian or Māori-Tahitian perspective).

In more than one way, *Hawaiki Nui* embodied surviving Māori and Polynesian oral traditions. Over a period of six years (1979-1985), this *waka* was constructed from traditional (Māori and Tahitian) materials, employing traditional Polynesian techniques and knowledge. The success of this unique vessel speaks for itself. As Hicks commented, "*Hawaiki Nui* is the only genuine attempt to traditional voyaging" up to this day, and "as near the genuine thing as you can get" (pers. comm. Hicks). Whakataka-Brightwell's and Cowan's joint masterpiece was a strong, non-verbal message; an ocean-going Polynesian *waka* which has been built and sailed, primarily based on surviving Pacific seafaring traditions. *Hawaiki Nui* has been a great inspiration to many *waka* enthusiasts; not only to those who are reviving their indigenous Māori

and Polynesian cultural heritage. To indigenous Pacific Islanders *Hawaiki Nui* and her voyage celebrated the survival and revival of some central Polynesian concepts, such as *whakapapa*. Despite considerable difficulties over the years, Whakataka-Brightwell and Cowan managed to keep Western influences to an absolute minimum during the construction and voyage. Both these men share a deep faith in traditional Polynesian knowledge and methods and, up to this day, they refuse the use of escort vessels, challenging other contemporary Polynesian voyaging canoe projects to do the same. As Whakataka-Brightwell publicly stated at the *Waka Moana Symposium* (*PWMS 1996*: 96):

> [I]t's about time, after 20 years of escorted canoe voyages, that we start really sailing and sail the way our ancestors used to sail.

According to Leith Duncan (1982: 463), the kinds of problems which arise during modern-day experimental voyages are simply due "to a lack of contemporary knowledge of earlier solutions". Therefore, he concluded, "[t]he major role of experimental voyages must be relearning those skills until present day voyaging is as routine as its earlier counterpart" (Duncan 1982: 463).

Presently, Whakataka-Brightwell and Cowan are taking up their own challenge, as they are constructing another sea-going sailing *waka*, *Hawaiki Nui II*, for a pan-Pacific traditional voyage in the near future (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell). Prior to these present developments, however, *Hawaiki Nui* was followed by the successful local revival of a different type of traditional *waka*. As Whakataka-Brightwell (*PWMS 1996*: 265) explained,

> After the voyage of *Hawaiki-Nui*, I wanted to build another sailing canoe but I thought the best way and the most practical way to provide canoe culture to my people was to introduce the outrigger canoe [*waka ama*].

The reintroduction of *waka ama* to Aotearoa New Zealand is the subject of my next chapter.

Chapter Three

Waka Ama

> The outrigger today connects people of all the Oceanic cultures through participation in outrigger racing just as its ancestor, the voyaging canoe, once connected populations through transport. (Al Ching cited in West 1997: 33)

3.1 Historical Background

The use of *waka ama*, traditional Polynesian outrigger canoes, by Māori *kaihoe* (paddlers) around Aotearoa New Zealand was last recorded in the late 18th century. Haddon and Hornell (1975: 194) remarked, that "when the Maoris made contact with Europeans . . . [t]he outriggers [single outrigger canoes] appear to have been already rare and on the point of disappearance at that time". The reasons for this disappearance of the single outrigger canoe are unknown, but it can be speculated that this was due to the abundance of large native trees (such as *tōtara* and *kauri*). Watercraft with an accordingly large beam (such as represented by *waka taua*) could be constructed, hence possibly making the outrigger as a stabilising device redundant in Aotearoa.[127]

Because of its early disappearance, little is known about the traditional use of *waka ama* by Māori. The material available from the time of European contact is very limited. [128] By the time interest in *waka ama* reawakened in Aotearoa in the 1980s the local knowledge about the canoe design had long since vanished (see Nelson 1991: 26). Archaeological excavations in New Zealand include the recovery of an unfinished pre-European outrigger canoe, excavated in the region of Te Horo (between Otaki and Waikanae) in 1961 and presently exhibited at the

[127] See 1.7.3.1 this thesis for a discussion of this point.

[128] Summing up historical references to outrigger canoes, contemporary author Heather Whelan comments:
> Cook mentioned the use of small outrigger canoes in the Hauraki Gulf but added that this was not common. Parkinson saw outriggers off the East Coast in 1773 and Forster described outriggers and double canoes in Queen Charlotte Sound in the same year. There are no further references to outrigger canoes . . . (Whelan 1998: 7)

Dominion Museum in Wellington (*PWMS 1996*: 101);[129] the so-called 'Henley Canoe', a complete hull of a *waka ama* found on the Taieri Plain (South Island); and four outrigger floats (Nelson1991: 26).[130] To my knowledge, none of these artefacts have been used to help design contemporary *waka ama* in Aotearoa New Zealand.[131]

In most other parts of the Pacific though, outrigger canoeing has not ceased. On the contrary, on more remote islands, such as Vanuatu (pers. comm. Francis Hickey), the outer Cook Islands (pers. comm. Dr Richard Walter), the Solomon Islands and the Marshall Islands (pers. comm. Dennis Allessio), to name only a few, the use of outrigger canoes is still thriving. This particular type of *waka* is meeting the needs of the islanders as an affordable everyday means of transport as well as for local fishing. Here, the significance of *waka ama* is mainly as an economical and highly functional means to an end. Furthermore, *waka ama* can be constructed and repaired by using resources and traditional skills within local communities.[132]

According to the late Sir Peter Buck (1949: 202), "the single outrigger canoe was the type used throughout Polynesia for general purposes". However, in many Polynesian islands today, especially in Tahiti and Hawaii, the use and purpose of *waka ama* has fundamentally shifted. Outrigger canoeing has developed from its traditional canoe roots into a popular contemporary racing sport. It is through this avenue, as a competitive sport, that *waka ama* were reintroduced to Aotearoa New Zealand in the late 1980s.[133]

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[129] According to Nelson this canoe is in the care of the Te Papa Tongarewa National Museum. (Nelson 1991: 26)

[130] One of these *ama* (float) is displayed in the Canterbury Museum. It was recovered at Monck's Cave (near Christchurch). "It is two metres in length and has tapered ends. The bottom is flat and on the upper surface there are three clusters of four attachment holes." (Nelson 1991: 26)

[131] Both Kris Kjeldsen as well as Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell have proofread an earlier version of this chapter and did not object to this remark.

[132] For example, in Vanuatu during the 1980s and 1990s, sailing *waka ama* have been very successfully reintroduced for fishing. Ironically, sailing *waka ama* here have now replaced the majority of Western fishing boats, which the Islanders had previously turned to. Because these boats were too expensive for the local communities to repair, and the Islanders lacked the skills to do it themselves, these eventually either had to be discarded, or forced them to become indebted. The revival of traditional outrigger sailing canoes allowed local communities to be much more independent and self-sufficient than it was possible using Western boat technology. (pers. comm. Francis Hickey, cf. *PWMS 1996*: 217 - 258)

[133] Most recently Rapanui, Easter Island, has also become part of this revival (pers. comm. Royce Metcalfe, Secretary of *Nga Kaihoe O Aotearoa Inc.*).

3.2 *Waka Ama*: A Contemporary Sport

3.2.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the revival of *waka ama* in its contemporary context as a Polynesian sport. My specific aim is to outline developments within the *waka ama* revival in respect to its cultural and social significance for Māori and other Polynesians, using the example of Aotearoa New Zealand. The striking speed and rate of this revival reflects a great local acceptance, particularly from within Māori and other Polynesian communities. I argue that the local success of *waka ama* (as a sport in Aotearoa New Zealand) is largely due to the benefits it holds for a young and growing generation of Māori and Polynesians. *Waka ama* as a sport not only enhances fundamental Polynesian cultural values, such as the concept of *whānau*, but also promotes important general values, such as a healthy life-style and an *auahi kore* (smokefree) policy. I will highlight the cultural and social significance of this revival, using selected examples which describe developments from within their local context.

The insights presented in this chapter are largely based on my own participation in *waka ama* since 1998 (at a club-level, *Fire in Ice Outrigger Canoe Club* in Dunedin, as well as national level), and on informal conversations I have had over the years with *waka ama* paddlers from various regions of New Zealand. I am greatly indebted to Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell, Kris Kjeldsen and Margaret Hicks, whose comments on an earlier draft were invaluable.

3.2.2 Design and materials

The name "*waka ama*" reflects the structure of this type of vessel. "*Waka ama*" is universally translated as "outrigger canoe", but strictly speaking the term "*ama*" only refers to the "float" (Buck 1949: 199). The "composite structure", which Westerners came to simplify as an 'outrigger' (Buck 1949: 199), consists of the *kiato* (cross-booms), *ama* (float) and optional *tiatia* (stanchions). The *ama* is connected to both sides of the hull via the *kiato* (cross-booms). This is done either by direct attachment to the *kiato* (as is the case in Hawaii, utilising *kiato* with a bend), or indirect attachment via connecting stanchions, referred to as *tiatia* in Central Polynesia and Aotearoa New Zealand, where this method was used. It is an interesting observation in this context, that "[t]he terms *kiato* for booms and *ama* for float are universal

throughout Polynesia but the terms for connecting stanchions [*tiatia*] vary" (Buck 1949: 199). As Buck (1949: 199) observed,

> The Polynesians were more exact in the use of technical terms than we are in English and as the outrigger was never an entity in their technique, they had no need for a general term to describe the outrigger as a whole. In the construction of the outrigger, the cross-booms [*kiato*] had to be lashed to both sides of the hull, the float placed in position at the correct distance below the straight booms, the connecting stanchions [*tiatia*] carefully pegged into the float in the correct positions and the correct angles, and finally lashed to the booms to maintain the correct distance between the float and booms. The canoe was then tested in the water to see that it floated with the right balance and any further adjustments with regard to altering the vertical distance between the booms and the float were made before the canoe was passed as ready for use.

Traditional hull-shapes and outrigger designs have altered over the years, but basic design principles remain the same (pers. comm. Kjeldsen; pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell). For example, it is still of vital importance to attach the *kiato* to the hulls as well as the *ama* in the correct manner, as described in detail above. The way these should be attached (ie. distance, angles and tension) also varies with the conditions in which the *waka* is going to be used.[134] The main difference between contemporary *waka ama* and the traditional Polynesian *waka ama* lies in the materials used. This is the only obvious concession to modern times. Today, the great majority of outrigger canoes built for practice and competitions are made out of fibreglass and use rubberstraps for the lashings (attaching the *kiato* and the *ama*). Fibreglass is a modern lightweight material, which is favoured for obvious reasons. Firstly, it is more easily accessible than wood since traditional wood resources have been largely exhausted. Secondly, fibreglass is much cheaper than wood (for the same reasons). Thirdly, it combines the qualities of being lightweight, strong and durable (if treated with care). Fourthly, the building process when using fibreglass is relatively simple, using a mould. Thus, without further complications, it is possible to produce as many exact replicas of a good canoe design as desired. Despite the fact that contemporary racing *waka ama* are made from modern materials, clubs around the country make sure that a new *waka* is traditionally blessed, similar to the way their Polynesian ancestors

[134] For example, as a paddler from the *Fire in Ice Outrigger Canoe Club* in Dunedin we lash our *waka ama* for the particularly rough conditions, we frequently experience in Otago Harbour, keeping the *ama* at a particularly long distance from the hull to increase our balance. We also adjust the tensions of the various lashings (connecting the *kiato* to both sides of the hull and on the other end to the *ama*) according to the degree of flexibility we need when paddling in three foot waves.

would have handled the launching of a wooden *waka ama*, before it touched the water for the first time.[135]

3.2.2.1 *Offshore racing*

The *waka ama* embodies a unique synthesis of speed and stability, which makes it the perfect vessel for open water canoe races. Its design is well suited for off-shore paddling and skilled *kaihoe* (paddlers) enjoy taking their *waka ama* into the surf. In Hawaii and Tahiti, for example, outrigger canoes are raced from island to island. The "Molokai Hoe" races a 70 km distance from Molokai to Oahu (in the Hawai'ian chain). In Tahiti, the "Hawaiki Nui Va'a" is an interisland race which includes three islands, and lasts for three days (pers. comm. Kjeldsen).

3.2.3 New beginnings in Aotearoa

It took almost two centuries before this slender and swift traditional Polynesian canoe design became a common sight again around Aotearoa New Zealand's coastline. After its reintroduction from Tahiti in the late 1980s, this popular Polynesian sport of outrigger canoe racing experienced a grand local revival. Today, roughly 7000 *kaihoe* of various ages, shapes and cultures paddle OC1 (single person outrigger canoes), OC6 or OC12 (outrigger canoes for six or twelve paddlers), and most recently also OC2 (outrigger canoes for two paddlers) on Aotearoa New Zealand's rivers, lakes and seashores. The success of this revival, I will argue, is not only based on the virtues of Polynesian outrigger canoe designs as racing canoes, or *waka tere*, but it is also largely due to the cultural significance of *waka ama*. From a modest beginning of three small clubs forming a national organization in May 1987, more than forty thriving outrigger canoe clubs,[136] enthusiastically promoting the revival of *waka ama*, have developed in the North and the South Island up to the present day. In less than a decade the paddling and racing of outrigger canoes has become a national sport in Aotearoa, that not only many Māori are proud to participate in, but people of all cultures enjoy.

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[135] For example, despite the fact that most our club-members (*Fire in Ice*) at the time were non-Māori, we made sure to incorporate a traditional ceremony and blessing, conducted by a well-respected Ngā Puhi elder, when we launched our new OC1 at Otago Harbour in 1999.

[136] More than 1500 *kaihoe* from forty-one clubs in Aotearoa competed at the National Waka Ama Championships 2000 at Lake Karapiro, January 17th to 22nd.

Three people deserve special recognition for having been instrumental in the reintroduction and development of *waka ama* paddling as a sport in Aotearoa New Zealand: Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell, Kris Kjeldsen, and Pili Muaulu. Whakataka-Brightwell became involved in outrigger canoe racing in Tahiti during the four and a half years he spent there completing the building of *Hawaiki Nui*. After his successful traditional voyage from Tahiti, arriving in Aotearoa New Zealand in December 1985, he set out to introduce Tahiti's national sport to his hometown, Gisborne, and to the East Coast. As stated in the programme to the 1997 *Waka Ama Nationals* (*SWAN 1997*: n.p.), he "recognized this be the very thing to help the youth of New Zealand regain some of their cultural heritage and traditions". Whakataka-Brightwell founded New Zealand's first *waka ama* club, *Marei Kura*, in 1985. In January 1986 Alec Hawke (and family) from Ngāti Whātua founded the second club at Okahu Bay with Whakataka-Brightwell's assistance.[137] While *Hawaiki Nui* was beached at Okahu Bay, Whakataka-Brightwell also met with Kjeldsen, who had previous experience paddling for outrigger canoe clubs in Southern California and Hawai'i before settling at Pawarenga (Whangape Harbour, Northland). He was surprised not to find any traditional Māori outrigger canoe racing in Aotearoa New Zealand. On hearing through the media about Whakataka-Brightwell's dream "to rekindle racing of traditional canoes", he decided to show some initiative himself (*SWAN 1997*). Kjeldsen went to discuss his plans with Whakataka-Brightwell and, mutually encouraged, they pursued two individual projects. Each of them in their own areas began building canoes and paddles and teaching the art of paddling and handling the canoes. Both projects relied on government funded work-training schemes, beginning in 1987. The same year Kris Kjeldsen and his trainees assisted Pili Muaulu from Samoa and his family in building the first traditional Samoan canoe in New Zealand: a *Pao Pao*, a two person fishing canoe. Pili Muaulu and his family founded Aotearoa's fourth outrigger canoe club, *Mitamitanga Ole Pasefika Va'a Alo*,[138] in Ngunguru (near Whangarei).

In 1987 Whakataka-Brightwell travelled to Pawarenga to help Kjeldsen establish *Nga Hoe Horo O Pawarenga*[139] and to introduce the paddle making technology he had learnt in Tahiti to

[137] Okahu Bay was the only *waka ama* club in Aotearoa New Zealand with a strict policy on only accepting paddlers of Māori descent. It therefore could not become part of the National Federation (see 3.4 this thesis about their principles) and it is interesting to note, that this club did not survive on the long run. (pers. comm. Hicks)

[138] 'Pride of the Pacific canoe club'.

[139] 'The fast paddles of Pawarenga'.

Pawarenga. In May 1987, at a landmark *hui* celebrating the launching of Pawarenga's first *waka ama*, three canoe clubs[140] *Marei Kura* (founded in 1985, Gisborne), *Nga Hoe Horo O Pawarenga* (founded in 1987, Pawarenga), and *Mitimitanga Ole Pasefika Va'a Alo* (founded in 1987, Ngunguru), became the founding members of the national outrigger canoe association *Tatou Hoe O Aotearoa* ("All our paddles of Aotearoa").[141] In the following years, many other clubs were formed and *waka ama* paddling spread rapidly in the North Island (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell; pers. comm. Kjeldsen), with people from more experienced areas assisting people in the new areas. This process is still continuing today.

The name of the national body was later changed to *The New Zealand Maori Polynesian Canoe Sporting Federation: Nga Kaihoe o Aotearoa Incorporated* (in the following referred to as *Nga Kaihoe o Aotearoa Inc.* which literally means 'The paddlers of Aotearoa'). The mission of *Nga Kaihoe o Aotearoa Inc.* is, "[t]o develop, promote and encourage all activities associated with Māori and Polynesian canoes, recognising and understanding the philosophy and cross cultural exchange and sharing amongst the people of the Pacific" (*Rules*: 1).

The revival of *waka ama* in Aotearoa started with three contemporary Tahitian outrigger canoes, two OC6 and one OC1, which had been gifted to Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell by Edward Mamaatma and shipped to Auckland in September 1987. Alterations were made "to be as close as possible to comply with international requirements while keeping in mind New Zealand ocean conditions. New Zealand decks and *ama* were designed and a mould was made" (Kjeldsen cited in *SWAN 1997*: n.p.). Pawarenga's first two six men racing canoes were made out of two converted marine ply browing skiffs in 1987. But, "[b]y 1990 we designed and manufactured the entire fleet of fourteen 6-man outrigger canoes for the world sprints in Auckland" (Herbert 1997: n.p.). Today, Hawaiian designs are also becoming increasingly popular, because they are especially well suited to rough ocean conditions.[142]

[140] Okahu Bay in Auckland did not participate in the establishment of the national organization.
[141] Whakataka-Brightwell became the founding president and wrote the principles of the constitution (pers. comm. Whakataka-Brightwell).
[142] For instance, *Fire in Ice* uses a Hawaiian OC6 design because it is ideal for paddling in the waves of Otago Harbour. The typically rounded belly-shape of the Hawaiian *waka ama* produces much more lift than a Tahitian design. By contrast, the Tahitian keels are shaped to a point, which makes these *waka ama* go fast in a straight line, but harder to turn. (pers. comm. James York, pers. comm. Toko Vakatini).

3.3 The Cultural and Social Significance of *Waka Ama*

> Whether canoes are used as ceremonial vessels or as a way of life, Maori attitude toward the ocean is becoming more personal, parental. The fear of the sea may still hold some people landlocked. Alas!
>
> The paddle in hand, paddler running to the canoe by the sea-shore. Crew launching the canoe, paddling, bursting together through the surf. Paddling in unison into the bay, returning surfing onto the shore, carrying the canoe out of the water, gently replacing it in its proper place. Laughing, discussing how the paddle blades in momentum lifted the canoe over each ocean swell. This canoe experience may be a peaceful salvation for our culture, our youth, elders, our friends, our country. (Whakataka-Brightwell 1991: n.p.)

For Maori and Pacific Islanders, the paddling of *waka ama* is not 'just' a recreational past-time or an exciting and competitive international sport. The *waka* reinforces their cultural and spiritual connection to *Tangaroa* and *Tāwhirimātea*, representing the sea and the wind, and celebrates their traditional links into the Pacific.

> The motion of the canoe, the slap of the ama sliding over an ocean swell and the great sense of harmony that one can achieve lost in the rhythmic pulse of your paddling, is a feeling that truly transcends time as you slide back a few hundred years when life was very much different that [sic] it is today; a world of canoes and legends, of tribal warfare and sacred rights, a time when Hawaiians and Tahitians were masters of this craft both as craftsmen and paddlers[.] (n.a., cited in Stevens 1997: 23)

The roots of this contemporary sport are closely intertwined with Polynesian cultural roots, going back to the ancient seafaring times of their ancestors. The reintroduction of outrigger canoe racing to Aotearoa represents the revival of a vital part of the Māori's own Polynesian heritage and, not only that, it strengthens and revitalises traditional cultural and social concepts.[143] It fits well into "the Maori understanding of time where the past, the present and the future are all part of a continuum" (Herbert 1990: 53). As Elaine Stevens (1997: 26) pointed out,

> Outrigging is unique in that no other sport can offer Maori . . . the opportunity for kuia, kaumatua, pakeke, and rangatahi to participate together and sometimes in the same waka. It is unique in that the whole whanau can participate and enjoy. . . . The other positive is that the language used in association with outrigger canoeing is Maori. Paddling is a

[143] For instance, our club-captain James York made sure that we all participated in *karakia* before we touched the local water of Lake Karapiro at the National Championships in January 2000. Since the lake is fed by the Waikato river, which has special significance for Waikato *iwi*, it is regarded as *tapu*. The *karakia* was performed to clear the spiritual path for our upcoming races.

> huge learning environment for many who participate, everyday we are surrounded by reo (language) and tikanga (customs).

The quick success of *waka ama* as a thriving sport in Aotearoa is built on a strong foundation of a well-functioning *whānau* system. As Hoturoa Kerr, the president of the *Nga Kaihoe o Aotearoa Inc.*, has observed:

> Over the last few years our paddlers have developed into some of the best in the world[144] and it is gratifying to know that our younger paddlers can compete successfully at world championship level. This is a tribute to the commitment shown by them and their coaches supported by their whanau systems. Where would our sport be without the whanau involvement? Everyone knows the answer. Waka ama paddling is unique as a sport. When regattas are held what do we see? Mokopuna [grandchildren], matua [parents] and kaumatua [elders] participating in everything. They paddle, they coach, they yell and cheer, they put heaps of time and energy into keeping the sport thriving. It is important that the concept of whanau involvement be acknowledged . . . (Kerr 1997: n.p.)

Gloria Herbert describes some of the positive social effects the involvement with *waka ama* has on local communities in the Hokianga:[145]

> The real gains are seeing entire families involved in healthy living and disciplines, of our young men and women having a sense of achievement and self-worth, of our children having positive role models to look up to. Paddling waka ama transcends boundaries of race, gender and age. (Herbert 1997: n.p.)

In Gisborne, Whakataka-Brightwell's aim in re-introducing *waka ama* to New Zealand was to work constructively against contemporary problems affecting Māori, such as drugs, alcohol and child abuse. Based on Matahi and Rapoia Whakataka-Brightwell's long-term experience in raising eight children (three of their own and five others) as well as coaching and training youth, *waka ama* creates a powerful 'antidote' against the apparent symptoms of disillusionment and frustration amongst Māori kids (Woods 1995: 67). *Waka ama* offers a viable alternative to a young and quickly growing Māori generation, otherwise engulfed in a dominant Pākehā society with Pākehā values and Pākehā ways of being. As Whakataka-Brightwell observes,

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[144] Since 1992 paddlers from Aotearoa have had numerous successes competing on an international level. For example, at the "Molokai Hoe" the team from Aotearoa came third in 1998 and second in 1999. That same year Aotearoa finished first at the 110 km race between the island of Ouvea and the mainland of New Caledonia. (pers. comm. Kjeldsen) Between 1992 and 1996 I counted thirty medals for Aotearoa's paddlers in three world sprints and a couple of marathons. (For an exact account of international successes up to 1996, see Kjeldsen in *SWAN* [*1997*: n.p.].)

[145] The Far North of New Zealand is a rather problematic region with a long history of poverty and other negative socio-economic indicators such as high unemployment.

> Kids don't get into outriggers because they are told to . . . . It happens naturally, I've seen the way they come to this sport off the streets, and I still wonder what it is that makes a kid so proud of walking down the streets with his paddle in his hand and sleeping with it at nights. It [*waka ama*] draws whole families together. (Whakataka-Brightwell cited in Woods 1995: 67)

Herbert has witnessed the positive long-term effects of the revival of *waka ama* on a community level at Pawarenga in the Hokianga. The community's participation in the revival led to the successful development of their own club, reaching an internationally competitive level, as well as having,

> . . . a spin-off benefit of a cooperative business, employing the equivalent of two full-time workers, which manufactures laminated paddles and quality six-man racing outrigger canoes with an ocean-going capability, and which will provide further opportunities for our up-and-coming generations. (Herbert 1990: 51f.)

Herbert concludes that,

> These positive outcomes together with the discipline and dedication of our waka club members, help to counteract the other obvious role-models of those who are involved in the alternative economy of growing dope and dealing. (Herbert 1990: 51f.)

In Oceania, the paddling of *waka ama* seems to be at least as much a celebration of culture and part of a 'healing' culture, keeping concepts of traditional Polynesian culture alive, as it is a popular sport.[146] For instance, in a recent interview Kris Kjeldsen, the president of the *Tai Tokerau Polynesian Canoe Association,* commented that Aotearoa's male paddlers, who prepared for the world championships in Tahiti at the time, were going to defend their *mana*.[147] Furthermore, regattas and championships are as much a cultural celebration as they are a competition. For example, at the National Championships at Parua Bay in 1997, I witnessed a gathering of hundreds of paddlers and their supporters in the Whangarei harbour basin (on the evening before the finals) for a variety of unique cultural performances. Over several hours, hundreds of children, youth and adults, spontaneously got up, representing their various clubs with *waiata* and *haka*, with dances and songs from other Polynesian regions (such as the Cook islands, Tonga or Samoa), or even by presenting humorous sketches underlined by modern

[146] Throughout many other places of the world, including Europe and North America, outrigger canoe racing has gained increasing popularity as a contemporary sport. It would be interesting to see if, and to what extent, the specific Polynesian cultural concepts and customs this sport is imbedded in locally, became adopted into a Western setting.

[147] One Network News, (6pm), Sports Report, 1 November 1998

RAP-rhythms. The atmosphere was that of a thriving Polynesian Festival, with all its passion and excitement.[148] To Gloria Herbert the success of the revival of *waka ama* in Aotearoa New Zealand embodies

> . . . a vision of a future where the revival of the Polynesian waka culture would be a key component in the revival of our people in terms of the overall physical, cultural, spiritual and social well being of our men, women and children. (Herbert 1997: n.p.)

The cultural and social implications of *waka ama* have evidently been a fundamental factor within the local revival of this sport in Aotearoa New Zealand. In this chapter my aim has been to show the particular cultural significance this sport has for Māori (and other Polynesians) in the contemporary context. The cultural relevance of *waka ama* would explain why this revival is so much more widespread and stronger in the North Island (with a much larger Māori and Polynesian population) than in the South Island. In the South Island there are currently only three active clubs which participated in the National Championships in January 2000 (*Fire in Ice* from Dunedin, *Te Awa Haku* from Christchurch, and *Motueka* from Motueka), as compared to 38 competing clubs from the North Island.[149]

The strong cultural significance of *waka ama* for Māori and other Polynesians, as highlighted in my chapter, is not to downplay the fact that *waka ama* is a multi-racial sport in New Zealand and officially recognised as such. As Hicks aptly remarked, "the ocean and the wind are the same for everyone" (pers. comm. Hicks). The constitution of *The New Zealand Maori Polynesian Canoe Sporting Federation, Nga Kaihoe o Aotearoa Incorporated* clearly states: "The concepts that are inherent in the canoe culture . . . belong to *all peoples who understand and accept the especial cultural perspectives of Maori and Polynesian people"* (*Rules*:1; my emphasis). It is one of the proclaimed aims of the sport "[t]o create and foster friendship among the peoples who practice the sport of Maori and Polynesian canoe paddling and sailing *regardless of culture*, religion, political affiliation, age or sex" (*Rules*:1; my emphasis). Based

[148] Most clubs also perform *waiata* and *haka* as a traditional acknowledgement of their paddlers' achievements at the medal presentations, as I personally witnessed at the National Championships in 1997, as well as in 2000.

[149] The South Island *waka ama* paddlers have been struggling to organise their clubs to a sufficient level and number, in order to be able to establish themselves as a nationally recognised region which can join the national body. At a recent meeting of the South Island region (in which I participated on 1 April 2000, at Rehua *marae* in Christchurch), only three clubs, from Dunedin, Christchurch and Motueka (the same as named above) were represented. Two others are known to exist, one other in Christchurch (*Mata Waka*, part of an urban Māori

on my experience with *waka ama* on a regional, as well as national level, I see a a much wider significance in this sport. *Waka ama* is not only of cultural, but also of socio-political significance, because of the way in which it enhances an understanding of Māori and Polynesian values, philosophies and ways of life for myself and others as cultural outsiders. Perhaps the nationwide success of *waka ama* shows what could be achieved if Western cultures make a serious longterm effort to understand, recognise and respect Maori (and other Polynesian) cultures and values and incorporate these values into New Zealand society in general. *Waka ama* reflects the great potential, which lies in combining elements of Polynesian and Western cultures in a healthy balance; based on principles of mutual respect, understanding and sharing. If *waka ama* can create a sustainable cultural bridge amongst its participants, why would this well-functioning cross-cutural communication not be possible on a larger scale as well? As a Polynesian sport with strong cultural objectives, *waka ama* offers unique opportunities for many Pākehā, who hardly experience Māori and other Polynesian cultures outside of a ceremonial context, if at all. The cultural significance of the reintroduction of outrigger canoe racing in Aotearoa was reflected on in this *whakatauki*, written by Canon Wi Huata for the 1990 *waka ama* world sprints in Auckland:

> Let us build a canoe of the spirit and
> Sail it with courage high into the ocean waters.
> May it so slice through the waves of injustice,
> Hate, pride and apathy,
> That all the world will say,
> "Yes this is how a canoe be sailed,' [sic]
> This is how all men, women and children can live together."
> (cited in Herbert 1997: n.p.)

3.4 Summary

In chapter three my intention was to document the reintroduction of *waka ama* to Aotearoa New Zealand, and its local developments as a sport, while examining the deeper cultural and social meanings this revival has for Māori and other Polynesians. I found that the revival of *waka ama* was an immediate result of the pan-Pacific relations established through Whakataka-

organisation) and one in Kaikoura. In contrast, the North Island is currently made up of five regions, which are growing continuously in terms of membership and newly founded clubs (pers. comm. Metcalfe).

Brightwell and his *Hawaiki Nui* project. Built on local initiatives by Whakataka-Brightwell, Kris Kjeldsen, Pili Muaulu, and many other contributors over the years, the revival of *waka ama* has been incredibly successful. Within a few years, *waka ama* has become a thriving sport in Aotearoa New Zealand and increasing numbers of local *kaihoe* are reaching international levels. This success, I argue, is not only based on the excitement and fun *waka ama* creates as an activity in itself, it is fundamentally linked to the uniqueness of *waka ama*, because of the way in which it is also meeting the cultural and social needs of contemporary Māori and other Polynesian people. As my case study of the *waka ama* revival in Aotearoa New Zealand clearly shows, *waka ama* is not 'just' a sport, it is also a social and cultural activity which has become particularly meaningful in a neo-colonial context with all its inherent complexities.

Part Two

This unprecedented far-voyaging revival has been a magnificent beginning, with implications for historians no less than for Pacific Islanders' cultural reaffirmation and pride. . . .

The long-term effects of this growing renaissance are incalculable.

David Lewis, *We, the Navigators*

Fig. 4.1. *Whangarei Heads, January 1997: Crew member Adrienne Taiaroa on board Te Aurere. (Photograph by author)*

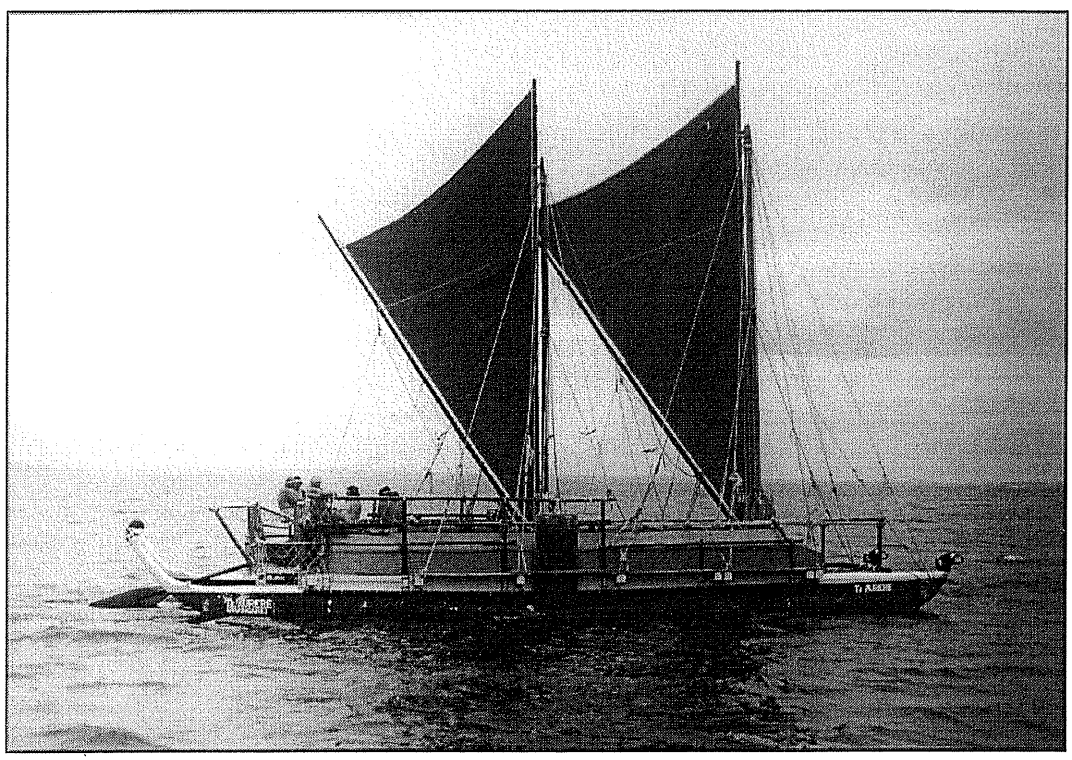

Fig. 4.2. *December 1998: Te Aurere sailing off the coast of Mangonui Harbour. (Photograph by author)*

Chapter Four

Te Aurere: Background

4.1 Introduction

Seventeen metres (56 feet) long, *Te Aurere* is a *waka hourua*, a twin-hulled Māori canoe, which has been specifically constructed for blue-water voyaging. Her hulls are carved from two giant *kauri* trees, cut down at Northland's Herekino State Forest in January 1991. Tai Tokerau *tohunga tārai waka* (canoe hewing expert) Hekenukumai Puhipi Busby, better known as Hector (or 'Hec') Busby, built this *waka hourua* from mainly traditional materials on his private family land at Aurere, Tokerau Beach in Doubtless Bay. Between 1991 and 1992 eight young Māori trainee builders assisted Busby in constructing this Māori voyaging *waka*.

A diverse crew of eleven men was on board *Te Aurere* on her first pan-Pacific test voyage in 1992 from Aotearoa to Rarotonga. After encountering some challenges and difficulties, as might be expected from a kind of vessel which had not been constructed in centuries in this part of the Pacific, they arrived just in time for the 1992 Festival of Pacific Arts in Rarotonga, with some support from the New Zealand escort vessel *Nam Sang*. *Te Aurere* and the *waka taua Te Ika a Māui* (also constructed by Busby between 1991 and 1992) represented Māori from Aotearoa under the Festival's theme "Seafaring Pacific Islanders". During her return to Aotearoa in 1992, on extended coastal voyages around Aotearoa in 1993/1994, on her pan-Pacific voyage to Hawai'i in 1995, as well as around the Aotearoa coast in 1998, *Te Aurere* has proven her seaworthiness. On the 1995 voyage *Te Aurere* was shipped to Tahiti, then went to Ra'iatea for the lifting of an ancient voyaging *tapu*, and sailed via the Marquesas to Hawai'i, and via the Cook Islands back to Aotearoa. During this voyage, *Te Aurere*'s navigators Jack Thatcher and Piripi Evans tested their newly acquired non-instrumental navigation techniques, and successfully guided the *waka hourua* between these Polynesian Islands.

Over the years, *Te Aurere* has also been used for local training voyages, and numerous trips to support cultural occasions in the Tai Tokerau region. These voyages are linked to *Te Aurere*'s *wānanga*, regular workshops, or teach-ins, set in a Māori context to revive traditional seafaring skills and knowledge. Usually held at *marae* around the North Island, these *wānanga* also aim to recruit and train potential crew members from different tribal areas.

In this chapter I aim to reconstruct significant details of the building and voyaging of *Te Aurere*, with an emphasis on the underlying cultural motivations of the individuals involved. I will also outline local as well as pan-Pacific developments and events, associated with the phenomena of cultural renaissance, in order to explore those ideas of the Pacific-wide cultural revival which have been highly influential in the development of the project.

4.1.1 Aims, objectives and methodology

If the information available on *Hawaiki Nui* is scarce, local publications on *Te Aurere* (except for the occasional article or brief mention in local newspapers)[150] are virtually non-existent. Scattered material can be found in academic publications; for example, *Te Aurere* sometimes features in scholarly articles published by members of the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS) (e.g., Finney 1994; Finney 1999), or receives a brief mention in publications on central issues of Polynesian voyaging (see, for example, Lewis 1994: 340, 352). But except for Finney's latest publication about the lifting of the *tapu* in the Society Islands in 1995 (Finney 1999), where *Te Aurere* played an instrumental role (see 6.5 this thesis), to my present knowledge no Pacific scholar has ever published a detailed report on other aspects of this project. Furthermore, besides a couple of informative articles, such as those published by journalist Sally Andrew in the *Pacific Islands Monthly* (Andrew 1995, 1996c). I am not aware of any popular publications about *Te Aurere*. A Nimrod Films production entitled *Kupe: Voyaging by the stars* (Turei 1992),[151] however, makes a very valuable contribution, as it documents in considerable detail

[150] Because I eventually had to decide to limit the scope of my thesis as much as I could to the Aotearoa New Zealand context only, I restricted my research in respect to newspapers to local publications. My sincere thanks to Paul LeNoël who kindly made his personal collection of newspaper clippings on *Te Aurere* available to me, which are referred to as LeNoel Papers.

[151] This film was a particularly helpful source of information for me and I subsequently arranged to meet with film director Peter Turei in Auckland. We had an interesting conversation about voyaging in the contemporary Māori context and it helped me to contextualise some information I had previously received from other insiders on the subject.

Te Aurere's construction (from the felling of the *kauri* trees onwards) through to her first voyage, and her arrival at Rarotonga in October 1992.

It is interesting to note, at the same time, that *Te Aurere* has featured in two theses (this one being the third), both submitted by Māori authors in Māori Studies Departments at North Island Universities in recent years. In a remarkable PhD thesis (written in *te reo* Māori), Te Taka Keegan (1996) from Waikato University documented the non-instrumental navigational techniques used during *Te Aurere*'s 1995 voyage in which he himself participated. Rawiri Taonui (1994) completed an MA thesis on "Polynesian origins, migrations and navigation" (Taonui 1994) at Auckland University, in which he also presented a brief account of *Te Aurere*.

Due to the scattered nature and paucity of material on *Te Aurere*, one of the main objectives of my fieldwork was to reconstruct a valid chronology of significant events, based on facts which over the years I have had to recover, check and double-check with various oral and the few written sources. I have fleshed out this skeleton of data with field work. My work is primarily based on information entrusted to me by key informants.[152] Sometimes those informants are named and cited within the text (such as Hector Busby), but at other times this information has been interwoven into my text without specific reference. This is because, at times, I have felt it necessary to protect the identity of informants due to the controversial nature of some of the issues. Nevertheless, whenever I could possibly justify it, I have avoided such a procedure and limited my text to a simple and straightforward presentation of factual knowledge about the construction, design, sea-trials, voyages, and *wānanga*.

Since my main interest lies in the cultural background and motivations of this revival of voyaging in Aotearoa, I have explored the variety of meanings and impacts *Te Aurere* has had on her Māori participants over the years. It has been of primary importance to gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural issues involved; or, as much as I could possibly achieve as a cultural outsider.

[152] The ideas of longterm participants, whom I consider to be culturally influential in the project, are also reflected in the chosen structure and my points of emphasis throughout the whole of this thesis.

In my work, I attempt to document the dominant attitudes of central people on the project and to trace the origin of their idea about voyaging. Just as I have done in the *Hawaiki Nui* chapter, in the *Te Aurere* chapters I present the central motivations of the Māori mover(s) of the project. In this case, the person who is widely recognised as the principal instigator is Hector Busby. I am particularly curious about the cultural origins and the historical context of the idea of building a voyaging *waka* within the contemporary New Zealand context. Therefore I have placed the *waka* builder's views alongside the factual knowledge I have gained about the project.

The following information is based on my experiences during my fieldwork, the core of which I conducted between March 1996 and August 1998. The contributions of a number of Māori informants and friends over the years have ultimately shaped my understandings of this project and its local New Zealand context. Countless informal conversations with crew members (who participated in past and/or present events) and my own observations as an active participant over the years are central to the way in which I came to see this project, and the way in which I decided what and how to write about it.

What insider information I received is of course, however, *based* on who I was in the eyes of my informants and friends, and how I fitted in as a participant and crew member on *Te Aurere*. A different person conducting the same research might have ended up with a presentation focusing on a completely different aspect of this revival as a result of the particular dynamics between the researcher's personality and their principal informants. Furthermore, I need to mention that many fascinating details I have encountered throughout my research are barely mentioned in my work at all. As one of my informants put it quite bluntly (at the time we were listening to some information shared with us by a particularly knowledgeable Māori elder): "This, of course, is for your ears as Ika,[153] the crew member, and not for that thesis of yours."

[153] My Māori friends on the project have given me several nicknames, referring to little memorable incidences I became involved in over the years. My most common nickname is 'Ika', the fish, as a result of Piripi Evans, one of our navigators, accidently losing his purse (with credit cards, banknotes etc.) overboard in a bay close to Whangarei Heads. Though most other crew members seemed to think that it was a hopeless task to try and recover Piripi's valuables, given the time that had passed, the currents and the depths of the water at this point, I simply put on my bathing suit and jumped into the sea, searching and diving for it (also partly because it was a good excuse to go for a little swim...). Eventually, to everyone's (and by that time also my own) surprise, I managed to recover the lost purse from the bottom of the bay at a considerable distance from the *waka*. Of course I returned on board not only with Piripi's dripping purse and all its contents in my hands, but also a big impish smile on my face. After that incident, everyone on board jokingly referred to me as 'Ika', the fish, and they also introduced me as such to others. Hence, over the years of my involvement with Māori, 'Ika' became something of a second name for me; especially given its affinity to my real name, Ilka.

Throughout my work I have tried to honour every single explicit wish of my informants in respect to what to include and what not to include. Most times though, they left it up to my own judgement, and overall I can only hope that the text presented here reflects – to some extent - the central cultural meanings the *Te Aurere* project has had to its Māori participants over the years.

4.2 A Hawai'ian link

Hector Busby's plan to build a Māori voyaging canoe slowly developed after he met the Hawai'ian navigator Nainoa Thompson in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1983. Busby recalls that with his first visit to Hawai'i in 1984, following Thompson's invitation, he began to seriously consider *waka hourua*. After having sailed on *Hōkūle'a*, a performance-accurate replica of a Polynesian voyaging canoe (completed by the Polynesian Voyaging Society in 1976), Busby's "intention was to get back there [to Hawai'i] and get our seafaring skills back" to Aotearoa (Busby 1998b: tape 2).

Furthermore, when *Hōkūle'a* arrived in Aotearoa in 1985, the late Sir James Henare's welcoming speech to the Hawai'ians left a lasting impression on Busby. It took exactly ten years before a Māori voyaging *waka*, built by Busby in Aotearoa, went to Hawai'i and back.[154]

> [O]f course, the biggest thing was the completion of Sir James Henare's dream. . . . [H]e hoped someday a canoe would be built on this end [of the Pacific] that would go back [to Hawai'i]. So November 30th [1995, when *Te Aurere* arrived in Hawai'i] marked the completion of Sir James Henare's dream. (Busby 1995: 6)

And lastly, Busby sees himself as having carried on where the late Sir Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa) left off. According to Busby, it was Buck's dream to build a Māori voyaging canoe before his death. Furthermore, Hawai'i, the place where Buck died, is where Busby started from. (Busby 1996)

4.2.1 *Hōkūle'a*'s voyage to Aotearoa

In 1983, Nainoa Thompson, the Hawai'ian navigator of the voyaging canoe replica *Hōkūle'a* and student of Satawalese master navigator Mau Piailug, had a special mission to fulfill. The sole purpose of his visit to Aotearoa New Zealand was to study the stars of the Southern

[154] Strictly speaking though, the voyage Sir James Henare dreamt about still needs to be completed. *Te Aurere* did not sail the first leg from Aotearoa to Tahiti, but was shipped there instead (LeNoel Papers).

Hemisphere for *Hōkūle'a*'s upcoming "Voyage of Rediscovery" in 1985. Thompson vividly remembers how he came to meet Hector Busby at Doubtless Bay:

> The only person I knew in Aotearoa, prior to going down, was a man that you all know [*talking to a Māori audience*], Mr. John Rangihau. . . . I asked him in my kind of foolishness, "Mr. Rangihau, I need to go to Aotearoa, and I need to study the stars in the northern part of your island. I looked at a map, and I located a place called Tereinga [sic]. It has a light house. Can you pick me up and drop me off there? I'll live in the light house; I'll take my own food. And when I'm pau [finished], can you pick me up?"; had no idea what I was doing. I knew no one but him. And he said, "okay, I'll do that."
>
> So I flew to Aotearoa. I was 29 years old. Went through customs and no John Rangihau. . . . I didn't know anybody. All of a sudden I see this very friendly lady with a banner with my name on it. And she's waving it above her head. And I was saying, oh boy, things are not going the way I throught they would. We went outside in the parking lot, and she put me in the back of her car. She had mattresses and pillows in back of the car to make it into a bed. And that was just one of the many, many gestures of caring that I had there. I was thinking, okay, we're going to go to Tereinga [sic]. This place with a light house.
>
> That's all I knew. And she said, "Oh no, we're going to someplace else. We're going to Aurere.["] But they didn't know where it was. So we were going around Mangonui for a while, then we finally went to this place called Aurere [referring to Hec Busby's land and bach at Aurere river, Tokerau beach]." [sic]
> (PVS-website: *rapanui/rediscovery.html*)

Thompson subsequently studied the southern stars at the future birthplace of the Māori voyaging canoe *Te Aurere* in Doubtless Bay. Of course he became well acquainted with his host, Hector Busby. The Hawai'ian navigator eventually left Aotearoa, but in the few weeks of his stay he left a lasting impression on the people he met. Thompson remarks,

> This connection to people, this building of relationships was probably the most powerful thing in all of my voyaging. Hector Busby was confused as to why this small little Hawai'ian was going to be with him to look at the stars. But when we talked about the canoe, he understood. He said, "I know what you're going to do is important. Do what you must do, and I'll help you all the way." You see, from that message, voyaging is not about one person. It takes many, many people.
> (PVS-website: *rapanui/rediscovery.html*)

Busby was inspired by hearing about the Hawai'ian voyaging canoe replica and the proposed voyage, retracing the routes of their Polynesian ancestors across the width of the Pacific. He asked Thompson to include Aotearoa, the westernmost corner of Polynesia, on their proposed

voyage (pers. comm. Busby).[155] Thompson had planted a yet invisible seed at Aurere, the seed of voyaging. In the following year Busby visited Hawai'i and took the opportunity to sail on *Hōkūle'a*. At the Hawai'ian voyaging canoe's departure for her "Voyage of Rediscovery", he recited a traditional Māori *karakia* for the vessel and her crew.[156]

During *Hōkūle'a*'s 12,000 nautical miles "Voyage of Rediscovery" between 1985 and 1987,[157] the Hawai'ian canoe's destinations in Polynesia were Tahiti, Rarotonga, Aotearoa, Samoa, Tahiti and Hawai'i.[158] Finney described this voyage as "basically Polynesian in conception":

> The Voyage of Rediscovery was designed to extend the scientific and cultural reach of *Hōkūle'a* beyond Hawaii and Tahiti by sailing her over a number of other voyaging routes celebrated in the ancient traditions and by getting the islanders along the way involved in our endeavour. . . . Those who sailed *Hōkūle'a* enjoyed the unique experience of stepping back in time to relive their seafaring heritage, whereas those who helped the canoe get underway, greeted her along the way, or simply followed the progress of the voyage[,] were able to vicariously experience this adventure in cultural rediscovery. (Finney et al. 1994a: xvi)

The cultural significance of *Hōkūle'a*'s voyage was reflected in the enthusiastic participation of "Hawaiians, Tahitians, Marquesans, Cook Islanders, Māori, Tongans, and Samoans" (Finney et al. 1994a: xvi). During her two-year "odyssey", *Hōkūle'a* exchanged part of her crew on every stop-over, giving people from different islands the chance to sail *Hōkūle'a* to the next pan-Pacific destination (Finney et al. 1994a: xvi).

Sailing to Aotearoa New Zealand from Central Polynesia was particularly difficult. "The 16-day voyage to Aotearoa took the canoe out of the tropical trade wind zone, across a zone of light and

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[155] The Hawai'ians appeared to be reluctant to include Aotearoa perceiving it as yet another challenging destination on *Hōkule'a*'s "Voyage of Rediscovery" (pers. comm. Busby). The difficulties anticipated on such a voyage, "moving out of the favourable trade winds and warm seas of the tropics, and into colder latitudes with their periodic spells of strong, stormy westerlies that could force back or even overwhelm any canoe headed southwest for Aotearoa" (Finney 1996: 369), were considerable.

[156] See 5.2.1.1 this thesis.

[157] This voyage also had great scientific significance. For example, *Hōkūle'a*'s success clearly showed, how Polynesian canoes in prehistory could have sailed from west to east when prevailing easterly tradewinds were replaced by seasonal westerlies (see Finney 1992; Finney et al. 1994a).

> [E]very summer, westerly winds blow with some regularity across the western Pacific, and episodically extend into the eastern Pacific. Furthermore, during El Niño events, trade winds falter across the South Pacific and more prolonged westerlies blow into Polynesian waters. Even in the winter months when easterly trades are the steadiest, brief spells of winds occasionally interrupt the trades. (PVS-website: *1985.html*)

variable winds, and into the colder, rainier, stormier southern latitudes of the western Pacific" (PVS-website: *1985.html*). Nainoa Thompson consulted Māori traditions (such as those recorded by Elsdon Best [1976]) in planning the navigational details of the voyage:

> [I]n general they [the sailing directions in recorded Māori legends] specify that during the period corresponding approximately to late October and November the canoe's prow should be pointed toward, or to one side or another, of the setting points of the sun, the moon and Venus. (Finney 1994b: 57)

While the sailing directions appeared "rather vague" to Thompson (though "probably . . . adequate to hit such a large target"), he was "impressed . . . by the fact that a sailing time late in the austral spring was specified" (Finney 1994b: 57). As Thompson's study of meteorological data, as well as "the testimony of yachtsmen", clearly revealed, late spring was the ideal (and perhaps the only viable) sailing time when coming from central Polynesia to Aotearoa, because it combined a minimum of risk with a maximum chance of favourable winds. Sailing at this time (clearly specified in Māori traditions) , one best avoids the cyclones prevalent in the austral summer while taking advantage of "spells of easterly winds"[159] to successfully sail south-west (Finney 1994b:57). Hence, *Hōkūle'a*'s voyage from Rarotonga to Aotearoa in November 1985 could, to a considerable degree, verify the historical value of ancient Māori traditions and legends. As Finney (1991: 399) concludes in retrospect, *Hōkūle'a*'s reproduction

> . . . of the way to sail through the late-spring migration window to Aotearoa, not only brings us closer to the manner of voyaging portrayed in the legends, but also evokes a quintessentially Polynesian way of thinking about and employing oral traditions that eludes us if we examine those traditions solely through Western analytical lenses.

4.2.2 1985: *Hōkūle'a*'s arrival

Before her proposed leg to Aotearoa in 1985, Hector Busby met up with *Hōkūle'a* in Rarotonga. Stanley Conrad (Te Aupōuri), today the captain of *Te Aurere*, had been selected to

[158] Except for the leg from Aotearoa to Samoa, the voyage was solely navigated by non-instrumental navigation methods, employing the signs of nature the way they were believed to have been used by the seafaring ancestors of the Pacific people. (pers. comm. Thompson)

[159] These easterly spells form along the northern flanks of "high pressure systems [which] dominate the seas to the east of Aotearoa" during the summer months (Finney 1996: 369). These easterly winds are likely to replace "the westerly trade winds common in the latitudes below the trade-wind zone" between November and March, the time specified in Māori traditions (Finney 1994b: 57).

join the crew of *Hōkūle'a* on this significant and difficult voyage to Aotearoa. Thompson recalls how he felt about the voyage at the time:

> We went down to Rarotonga. Hector [Busby] was there. We did not have the kind of weather conditions we needed to go. Safety was a priority. We had tropical cyclones near Rarotonga, and New Zealand was experiencing a late winter with their subtropical lows. The two worst conditions we wanted. I was frankly afraid. I was afraid to go because there were so many people's lives at stake. And I was in my early thirties, and I did not have the confidence and the maturity to be handling that kind of pressure. My Dad ['Pinky' Thompson] said, "You make the best decision you can make, and we will all follow that." And Hector [Busby] said, "Don't worry. When you go, you will be there because your ancestors are with you." Two very powerful concepts from those that I would consider parents to me.
>
> And we did leave. And Rarotonga in the stern took about six hours to have her go below the horizon. It was an incredible, incredible voyage, the special moments. We had an incredible crew. A crew of common people, bonded around a common vision, from all walks of life.
> (PVS-website: *rapanui/rediscovery.html*)

In December 1985, Māori and Pākehā New Zealanders witnessed the arrival of two independent Polynesian voyaging canoe replicas, *Hōkūle'a* and *Hawaiki Nui*, making landfall on their shores, just a few weeks apart from each other. The 8th of December 1985, the date of *Hōkūle'a*'s traditional welcome, was a historic occasion in modern New Zealand history. After a decline in Polynesian voyaging which lasted several centuries, finally a twin-hulled voyaging canoe from a distant East-Polynesian origin, was about to touch the shores of Aotearoa again. Māori oral traditions, as well as archaeological and linguistic evidence, point towards central eastern Polynesia, probably the Southern Cooks and the Society Islands, as the origin of Māori and their cultures (Taonui 1996). By retracing the possible ancient searoads of the Māori ancestors, *Hōkūle'a*'s voyage was particularly meaningful to contemporary Māori. Northland Māori (Tai Tokerau) had long prepared to welcome *Hōkūle'a* at the historic Waitangi in the Bay of Islands.[160] Anticipating her arrival, people were scattered everywhere along the shores facing the sea. Excitement began to spread as some started to make out the contours of a Polynesian voyaging canoe approaching Aotearoa's shore; the two crabclaw-sails clearly revealing its Hawai'ian identity. "*Haere mai....haere mai... haere mai....*", Māori women gathered around the beach chanted their traditional welcome. The *karanga* from afar invited the Hawai'ian

[160] The following account of *Hōkūle'a*'s arrival is largely based on a private videorecording of the described events, kindly made available to me by Hector Busby.

visitors to "come hither". *Hōkūle'a* was slowly approaching, guided towards the shore of Aotearoa New Zealand by *Ngatokimatawhaorua*, the historic *waka taua* of Tai Tokerau, especially launched for this occasion.

Propelled by eighty plus chanting paddlers, *Ngatokimatawhaorua* approached *Hōkūle'a* at Tapeka point. Busby recalls being on board the *waka taua*: "We went five miles out in the big *waka taua* and escorted the *Hōkūle'a* into port" (Busby 1995). And he added, "[t]hat was the start of double-hulled canoe voyaging for me" (Busby 1995). Busby traditionally welcomed *Hōkūle'a* and her crew out on the water and also recited the second half of the *karakia*, in order to release the *taniwha* after *Hōkūle'a's* successful journey.[161] From a perspective on board of *Hōkūle'a*, the arrival was no less spectacular. Thompson, who navigated the voyage, remembers:

> When the Maoris greeted us outside in the swells, we heard them chanting before we saw them. And then we could see the canoe rise on the top of the crest, and settle back down in the trough. It was awesome.
>
> To me, it was such an important time for Stanley [Conrad, the only Māori New Zealander on board] standing there in the rear as for us. The joining of two canoes was the joining of two cultures. These two cultures have common ancestry. This is not a union of people. It's a reunion.
> (PVS-website: *rapanui/rediscovery.html*)

Following the compulsory customary formalities, the Māori *kaihoe*, or paddlers, accompanied the voyaging canoe to its anchoring place in the bay. *Hōkūle'a*'s crew then boarded the historic *Ngatokimatawhaorua*. After paddling them close to the shore, the Māori *waka*-crew invited their visitors from afar onto their shoulders, to carry them on to the soil of Aotearoa.

The *pōwhiri*, the traditional Māori welcoming ceremony, proceeded on historic grounds, the Waitangi *marae*, and the speeches, *waiata* and performances lasted throughout the night until the next morning. (Finney et al. 1994a: 196f.; private videorecording, courtesy of Hector Busby) Thompson, as he describes the lasting impressions of this event, formulates the essence of his experience of a Māori *marae*:

[161] See 5.2.2.1 this thesis.

> [W]e [*Hōkūle'a*'s crew] were invited to this special, special occasion, to the marae at Waitangi. And we were quickly educated that the marae houses wellness for your people [*addressing a Māori audience*]. We watched grandchildren and grandparents dance together and sing together. We were greeted in the traditional way because that was the way it's supposed to be done. We understood that in these houses, it houses not just people, but it houses the genealogies, how you trace your ancestry back to the actual canoe that brought you to Aotearoa. . . . I can see how close and connected you are to your ancestry. That is very powerful. The marae houses not just your past and where you are today. Because you are connected to the past, I believe that it's much easier to see what kind of future you want to voyage to. This was another part of our own work towards renewal. (PVS-website: *rapanui/rediscovery.html*)

4.2.3 A Māori interpretation and its consequences

Hōkūle'a's arrival was exultantly celebrated by Māori as a confirmation, or an empirical 'proof', of the sailing and navigational capabilities of their seafaring ancestors (cf. Finney 1994b: 72). The late Sir James Henare welcomed *Hōkūle'a*'s crew on behalf of Māori, expressing the heartfelt significance of the event:

> You have shown that it can be done and it was done by our ancestors. To me, this is a most important occasion and I smile, and I laugh, and I shall smile again tomorrow, at all the critics that said it was never done. It is my sincere wish that one day we may see our own waka returning to our historical homeland.
> (Sir James Henare cited in *TAEP 1995*: A-8)[162]

Thompson remembers Henare's speech almost verbatim and adds:

> This was a very special moment for him [Sir James Henare], a very special occasion . . . I recognized from him that we [Polynesians] already come from a powerful heritage and ancestry. The canoe, on its voyages, is just one instrument to connect that. Sir James Hinare [sic] also said an incredible statement . . . because the 5 tribes of Taitokerao [sic] trace their ancestry, their family, from the names of the canoes, and because you people from Hawai'i came by canoe, therefore by our traditions, you must be the sixth tribe of Taitokerao [sic]. We didn't know what to make of that, such a powerful statement . . . In a few sentences, Sir James Hinare [sic] had connected us to you. And he said that all the descendants from those who sailed the canoe are family in Taitokerao [sic].
> (PVS-website: *rapanui/rediscovery.html*)

For Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand, *Hōkūle'a*'s journey represented a physical and spiritual reunification of the extended Polynesian family (*whanaunga*) from the Pacific.[163] The honorary

[162] Except for the last sentence, this quote from Sir James Henare's speech can also be found in Finney (1994b: 72).
[163] See also 6.2 this thesis.

adoption of *Hōkūle'a's* crew as the "'6th tribe' of Tai Tokerau region" (Finney et al. 1994a: 197) was an extraordinary cultural welcome offered to the Hawai'ians.

The voyage was an event of great historical importance for *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) today. The common descent of Hawai'ians and Māori people was acknowledged in a traditionally significant way, by adopting the modern-day voyagers as yet another Northland *iwi*. This modern gesture by Northland Māori is, to my knowledge, unique in the modern history of Aotearoa New Zealand. From a cultural perspective it is highly significant, as Māori *iwi* generally trace their genealogy to one of the celebrated *waka*. To Māori, *waka* are a particularly important symbol of identity. By adopting *Hōkūle'a's* crew and their extended families as an honorary Māori tribe into Tai Tokerau, this ancient tradition was revived as it was symbolically transported into a modern voyaging context. So in more than one way, *Hōkūle'a's* visit to Aotearoa New Zealand reestablished a unique bond between New Zealand Māori and Hawai'ians. As Thompson remarked, "[t]here became a much greater purpose of going to Aotearoa than just for science and culture. It was about connecting people" (PVS-website: *rapanui/rediscovery.html*). Hence, today, Tai Tokerau in actual fact consists of five Māori tribes (Ngāti Whātua, Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Kahu, Te Rarawa and Te Aupōuri), and one Hawai'ian *iwi*, *Hōkūle'a*.

Though newly established, this bond is expressed in a cultural manner, using traditional Māori concepts, such as *waka*, *iwi*, and *whānau*. It is a bond based on *whanaungatanga*, or family togetherness, a concept deeply rooted in ancient Polynesian seafaring traditions. But it is also the bond between two subaltern societies engaged in the revival of their cultures (and hence inspiring each other through the exchange of traditional knowledge and customs).

This "connection" articulated by Nainoa Thompson, manifested itself in mutually recognised fundamental elements of their cultural identity, the voyaging canoes. The Hawai'ian "Voyage of Rediscovery" inspired the building of the Māori voyaging canoe *Te Aurere*. But not only that, some of *Hōkūle'a*'s crew members, such as Nainoa Thompson and Clayton Berthelman, lent an incredible amount of practical help (physical help, as well as advice and training) to the project, as I will describe later. Building this Māori voyaging *waka* in a sense became an 'extended family obligation', solidifying the special link established between Hawai'i and Aotearoa in 1985.

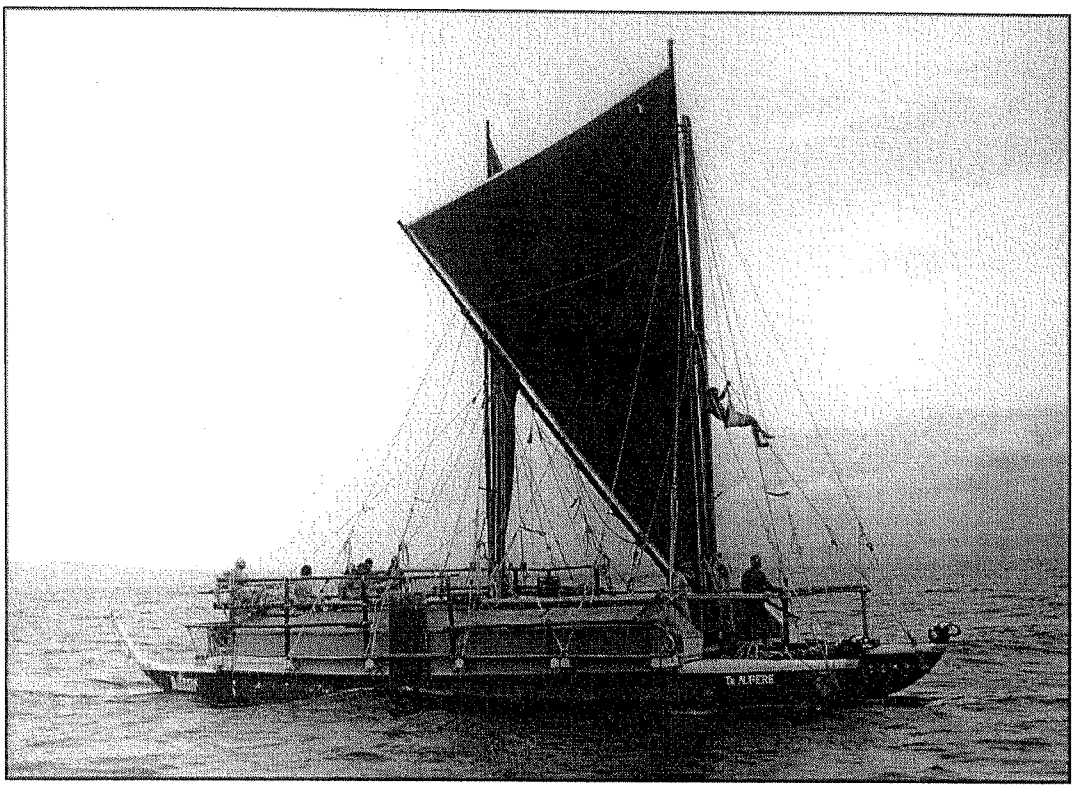

Fig. 4.3. *December 1998: Te Aurere sailing off the coast of Mangonui Harbour. (Note the resemblance between Te Aurere's hulls and those of the historic Māori double canoe below.) (Photograph by author)*

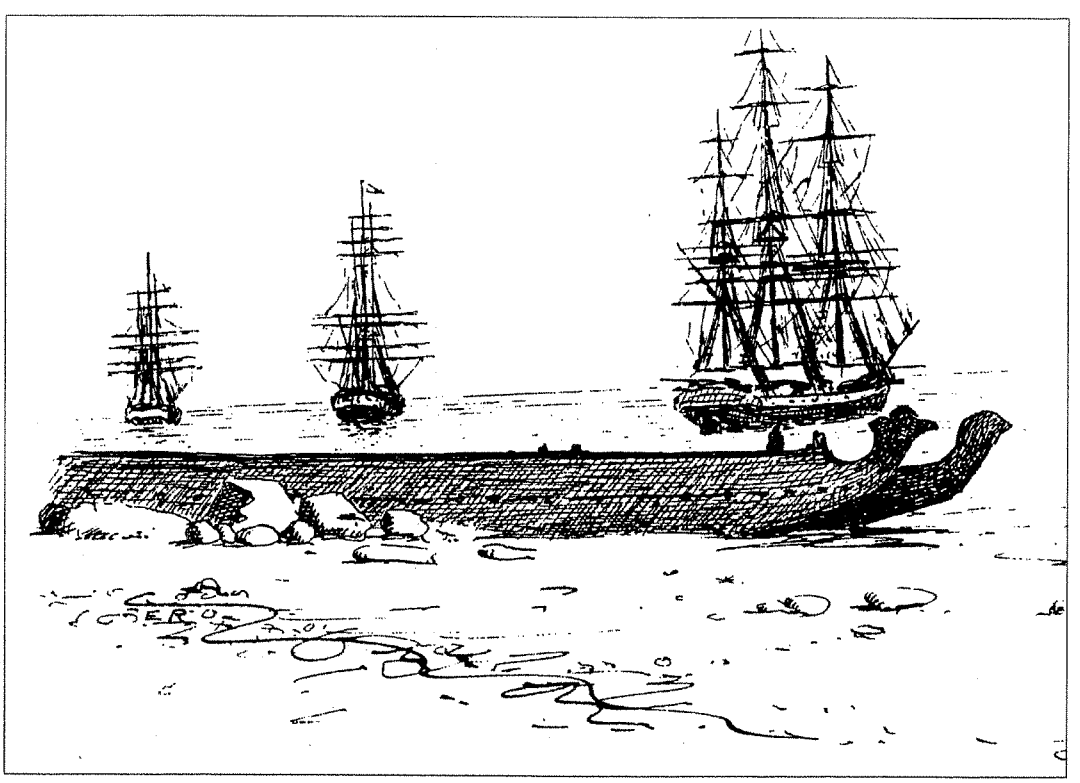

Fig. 4.4. *A "Double Canoe Of Otago. As depicted by a member of D'Urville's staff. Sketched by Miss E. Richardson from original in Hocken library." (Enlarged image from Best 1976: 11)*

4.3 Sourcing traditional information

Some of the traditional knowledge Busby (1998b: tape 3) employed for his *waka hourua* project came from local oral sources (through his *kaumātua*), but he also informed himself by looking at ethnographic work, such as *The Maori Canoe*, published by Elsdon Best (1976) (Fig. 4.3 & Fig. 4.4). Furthermore, vital information was passed on to him from Hawai'i, where the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS) at the time could rely on more than a decade of experience in reviving Polynesian voyaging.

4.3.1 First-hand learning: *waka taua*

The first-hand traditional knowledge Busby had access to came from local *kaumātua* he met through his involvement with *waka taua* since the early 1970s. Much of the knowledge still prevailing in his *iwi* (such as the traditional selection criteria for trees) was passed on to him, beginning with his participation in restoring *Ngatokimatawhaorua* in the 1970s. The awe-inspiring, nearly 120 feet (35.6 m) long *Ngatokimatawhaorua*, is the pride of Tai Tokerau's combined tribes. As part of the historic fleet, *Ngatokimatawhaorua* was constructed on the initiative of the Māori Princess, Te Puea Herangi, for the Treaty of Waitangi centennial in 1940.

4.3.1.1 *The 'fleet' of 1940*

Princess Te Puea Herangi, member of the Tainui *kāhui ariki*, or tribal leadership, of Waikato, was the instigator of a resurgence of *waka taua* in the late 1930s. Her vision to construct a 'fleet' of seven canoes,[164] representing and unifying the major *iwi* of Aotearoa,[165] eventually resulted in four *waka taua*.[166] They refurbished historic *Te Winika*,[167] and built three new *waka*

[164] The idea of a prehistoric 'fleet' (representing the most widely celebrated legendary seven ancestral Māori *waka*), having gained wide support amongst Pākehā as well as Māori during the 20th century, has long since been disputed. For a most accomplished publication researching the origins and the validity of the idea of the so-called 'fleet', see David R. Simmons (1976), aptly titled *The Great New Zealand Myth*.

[165] Besides her ambition to unify the Māori people (she supported the *Kōtahitanga* Unity movement), Te Puea also wanted to physically represent Tainui's "spiritual and physical links" with the Waikato river. (Nelson 1991: 62) The Waikato region has always been, and still is, famous throughout New Zealand for the strong tradition of the Tainui people in making and paddling *waka taua*. Annual races on the Waikato river are still conducted today. (ref. newsp.)

[166] The at first very supportive government of the day withdrew the allocated funding again due to World War II (Mikaere 1990: 9). But Te Puea's initiative was strong. The support she received as a leader from her people combined with the money accumulated through various cultural fund-raising activities, eventually enabled her to complete four *waka taua*.

[167] *Te Winika* was the first *waka taua* to be completed again, at a time when *waka taua* had virtually

taua, two of which were built in Te Puea's own region and one in Northland.[168] These two Tainui *waka taua*, christened *Aotea*[169] and *Takitumu*,[170] and the Tai Tokerau *waka Ngatokimatawhaorua*, featured together with the historic and successfully restored *Te Winika* at the 1940 centennial at Waitangi (Mikaere 1990: 9; Nelson 1991). The display of these four *waka taua*, initiated by Princess Te Puea Herangi from Waikato, was a memorable Māori statement of their unity, perseverance and *mana*.[171]

4.3.1.2 *Ngatokimatawhaorua*

Ngatokimatawhaorua[172] was constructed with Tainui co-operation by Tai Tokerau (Ngā Puhi, Te Aupōuri, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Kahu and Ngāti Whatua) in 1939. The late Te Rangi Poutapu, *tohunga tārai waka* from Tainui, supervised the building process as he was then the last remaining Māori expert-carver of canoes.[173] Sent to Tai Tokerau by Te Puea, Poutapu gave his knowledge, sharing his traditional skills and ritual knowledge in respect to *waka* with the *iwi* of Tai Tokerau during the construction of *Ngatokimatawhaorua* at Waipapa Inlet in Kerikeri. That was how these traditional Māori skills returned to Tai Tokerau region, brought back by a *tohunga* from Tainui.

After the 1940 celebrations, the massive *Ngatokimatawhaorua* (unloaded she weighs no less than 12 tonnes) was dry docked "under the kauri shingle roof of the canoe house on the

disappeared from the surface of the Waikato river. This historic *waka taua* was partly buried in the riverbanks and on the Princess' initiative, the remains of the hull were resurrected in 1936. The restoration of *Te Winika* was successfully completed in 1938 and symbolised the beginning of Te Puea's fleet. Now this famous *waka taua* is on display in the Hamilton Museum.

[168] These two *waka taua*, *Aotea* and *Takitimu*, were constructed shortly after *Te Winika's* restoration by Te Puea and her Tainui supporters in 1939.

[169] *Aotea* was renamed *Tūmanako* ('The Aspirations') in 1970. (Nelson 1991: 63)

[170] *Takitumu* was renamed *Te Rangatahi* ('The Young People') in 1970. (Nelson 1991: 63)

[171] Besides the powerful presentation of their *waka Te Winika, Aotea, Takitumu* and *Ngatokimatawhaoru*, the trained Māori crews performed *haka* and *waiata*. The 1940 commemoration re-enacted the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and also featured the Māori Battalion before they left to World War Two.

[172] '*Nga toki-mata-wha-o-rua*' literally means 'the second adzing of Matawhaorua'. The legend associated with *Ngatokimatawhaorua* is based on the story I was told by Hec Busby. When Kupe returned to Hawai'iki with his *waka Matawhaorua* he brought with him many fascinating stories about a huge land he had discovered in the South. The chief Nukutawhiti, his nephew, tired of the continual warfare in his homeland, was very eager to go there but he had no *waka*. Since Kupe was old and decided to stay in Hawai'iki he offered his voyaging canoe to Nukutawhiti and as well as giving him navigational and sailing instructions Kupe re-adzed and refitted the worn *Matawhaorua* so it was able to carry more people. The *waka* was renamed *Ngatokimatawhaorua* - 'the second adzing of Matawhaorua' - and successfully brought its crew over to Aotearoa. *Ngatokimatawhaorua* is widely recognized as one of the ancestral *waka* of the Northland Māori tribes, the *iwi* of *Tai Tokerau*. (pers. comm. Busby)

[173] as stated in the *Russell Review*, Vol 13, 1991: 77

foreshore of the Waitangi National Trust grounds" (*Russell Review*, Vol 13, 1991: 77). *Ngatokimatawhaorua* did not move for the following 33 years. Finally, in 1973, Tai Tokerau elders eventually decided to restore *Ngatokimatawhaorua*. The *waka* was to be relaunched at a significant time marking the change of government (pers. comm. Busby). Since the 1974 Waitangi celebrations, *Ngatokimatawhaorua* has featured on an annual basis at Waitangi and has also been launched on other culturally significant occasions, such as the arrival of *Hōkūle'a* in 1985.

4.3.1.3 *Busby's involvement*

Hector Busby was one of the men involved in her restoration. He remembers his fascination with *Ngatokimatawhaorua* dating back to his schooldays:

> I used to sit and admire *Ngatokimatawhaorua*. . . . I often wondered if I would ever see a *waka* like that on the water. . . . Because being in this isolated area up here [Kaitaia] I didn't even realize that there was *waka taua* further South. (Busby 1998a)

In 1974 Busby was appointed as one of the official caretakers of *Ngatokimatawhaorua*. In hindsight, he sees that as "the beginning of a role that carried me on to building the voyaging canoe *Te Aurere*" (Busby 1998a). Over the years, but notably in 1978, Busby learned the skills and traditional knowledge involved with the building and maintenance of *waka* (i.e., selection of trees, traditional customs, details of construction, etc.) from his *kaumātua* (tribal elders), Taupuhi Eruera and Tame Muri (Williams 1996).

4.4 From *waka taua* to *waka hourua*

4.4.1 1990 *Kaupapa Waka*

Over the past decade a number of Māori projects and organizations have been active in the revival of *waka* in Aotearoa New Zealand. These include *Kaupapa Waka*,[174] which has aimed to achieve *kōtahitanga* (bringing people together through a common cause) at a tribal, regional and national level of the Māori people; *Nga Waka*, the national organization established in 1991

[174] A project of the Maori Standing Committee of the New Zealand 1990 Commission with the aim of finding a strong Māori perspective for the 150 year commemorations of the Treaty of Waitangi.

to continue the process initiated by *Kaupapa Waka*;[175] and *Te Tai Tokerau Tarai Waka Inc.*, an incorporated society since 1993 which is "committed to the revival, retention, testing of all aspects of traditional Maori waka construction techniques, seafaring and navigation skills" (*TAEP 1995*: A-6). The 1990 *Kaupapa Waka* project was organized to meet the following two needs:

> The first is to demonstrate mana Maori, pride in Maori arts and organisation, by doing something that is not totally reliant on government funding, and which will encourage ingenuity, revive old skills and, more importantly, motivate Māori people.
>
> The second is to provide a vehicle by which the majority of Māori people - those whose views and opinions seem to be ignored by the media in favour of the more vocal minority - can make a powerful statement about their participation in the life of the nation. (Mikaere 1990: 9-10)

Project coordinator Haare Williams has always seen *Kaupapa Waka* "in wider terms, as an expression of the Māori renaissance. In this case it fostered a rediscovery of carving and seafaring skills, a re-emergence of history and an awakening of tribal pride" (Williams cited in Mikaere 1990: 12).

In this context Busby successfully constructed the *waka taua*, *Mataatua*,[176] in 1989, followed by *Te Ika a Māui* in 1992. Today Busby is well respected as a *tohunga tārai waka*, an expert-builder of *waka*, not only amongst Tai Tokerau. Haare Williams, a project coordinator of *Kaupapa Waka* project, credited Busby with holding "a key leadership role in the development of waka across the country" and referred to him as "a living repository of taonga" (Williams 1996). Furthermore, Williams observed that during the preparations for the 1990 commemoration at Waitangi, "[n]ovices, not even apprenticed in the craft of waka building, turned quickly to him [Hector Busby] for the rituals, knowledge and the practical waka building skills" (Williams 1996). Busby's longterm experience with *waka taua* constituted much of his

[175] Following the success of the *Kaupapa Waka* at the 1990 celebrations at Waitangi, a national federation of *waka*, *Nga Waka Inc.*, was established in 1991 with a *kaupapa* intended to "maintain the wairua, feelings, excitement and support generated by that historic occasion" (Newsletter Nga Waka 1992). As a recognised *waka* organisation, *Nga Waka Inc.* receives annual funding from *Te Waka Toi*. It is set up as "an incorporated society, with membership available to individual and corporate bodies who can identify as being affiliated with at least one of the waka on the register of waka" (n.a. 1994). In May 1994, 27 waka were registered (n.a. 1994).

[176] This *waka taua* represented Tai Tokerau *iwi* and *hapū* with genealogical links to the migration canoe of the same name at the 1990 celebrations. *Mataatua* was the only *waka* of all of them to attain the original idea, namely to train *kaihoe* who paddle their *waka* to Waitangi. *Mataatua* covered a distance of more than 100 kms, from Aurere, Doubtless Bay, to Waitangi. (pers. comm. Busby; Mikaere 1990: 14)

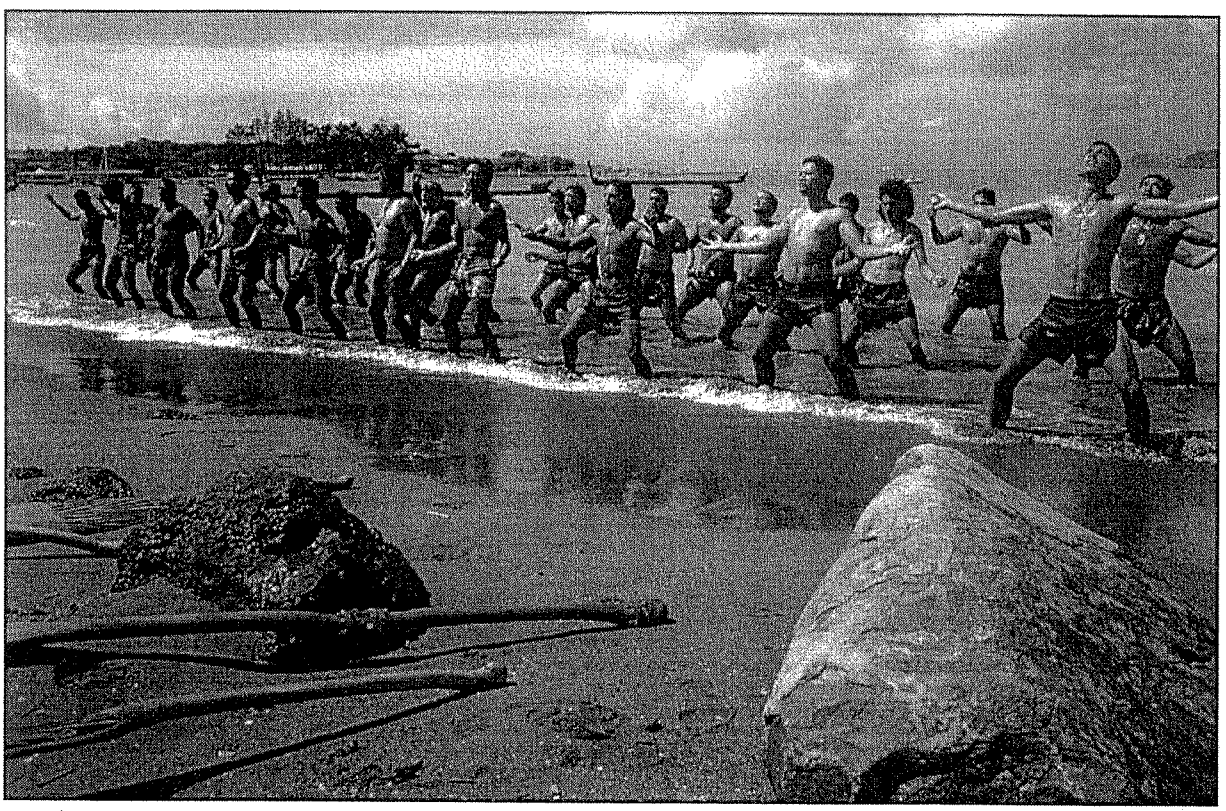

Fig. 4.5. *1990 Kaupapa Waka (Waitangi Beach, February 1990): One of the waka taua crews performing a haka. (Te Awekotuku 1996: 68 [Photo A. Marchant, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington])*

personal background on traditional Māori knowledge. He would draw on this knowledge and experience during *Te Aurere*'s construction.

4.4.2 Busby's proposal

In 1990 Busby announced his plans to build a double-hulled voyaging *waka*. His endeavour to construct and sail a traditional double-hulled oceangoing Māori *waka* was definitely not motivated by a desire to prove something to the academic world. He comments,

> I am not even interested in that. I don't know much about history . . . . The only reason why I wanted to take this on was, I knew my ancestor [Kupe] went back there [to Hawaiki], he gave his *waka* to one of my other ancestors [Nukutawhiti] and he came back, met up with my ancestor's daughter, and that was the beginning of one of my tribes, Ngāti Kahu. (Busby 1998a)

Part of "a comprehensive proposed long term development plan from Te Tai Tokerau Waka Kōmiti", the proposal's intention was to ensure that the cultural impetus generated by the emergence of *waka taua* in 1990 was to continue (*TAEP 1995*: A-8 to A-9). The points listed in this proposal were:

> 1. Building a double hulled voyaging canoe for voyaging expeditions and long term educational purposes;
> 2. Recording the skills and knowledge of our ancestors for use in future educational programs in waka construction and seamanship;
> 3. Provide meaningful employment for the district's youth. Initially through Maccess training schemes and in the long term through project funded employment;
> 4. Provide a link with our Pacific relatives and other indigenous groups involved in waka development. (*TAEP 1995*: A-8 to A-9)

The aims and objectives of *Te Aurere* as formulated in the same education package, were:

> a. to foster understanding and goodwill between Māori and Pākehā;
> b. to establish a close and caring relationship between the kaumātua [elders] and rangatahi [youth];
> c. to use Kaupapa Waka as a vehicle for the social, intellectual and spiritual development of New Zealanders as a whole;
> d. to cement social, cultural and economic links with other waka federations and indigenous groups around the world;
> e. to sail from New Zealand to Rarotonga in 1992 to take part in the Cook Islands Festival of South Pacific Arts and Crafts;
> f. to retrace the sea trails pioneered by our ancestors around 900AD; to increase and explore understandings and inspirations generated by this project;

g. to foster related programmes, such as waka building or waka races in schools and marae around New Zealand;
h. learning the skills and knowledge involved in waka construction, carving, river, lake, coastal and off-shore navigation;
i. to learn traditional karakia, chants and takitaki [songs], and
j. leadership training. (*TAEP 1995*: A-9)

4.4.3 Participants

In 1990 at a meeting of "the national waka kōmiti" (*Te Tai Tokerau Waka Kōmiti*), Busby announced his anticipated voyaging canoe project to the delegates from different areas. He invited the *kōmiti* members to send anyone interested in sailing Māori *waka hourua* from their local communities up north to him (Busby 1998b: tape 1).

Te Aurere is a contemporary Māori cultural project under the leadership of Hekenukumai Busby. It relies strongly on a wider support from Māoridom in terms of recruiting people who commit their time, energy and expertise (in most cases free of charge and funded out of their own pockets) to the project. *Te Aurere* has attracted participants from a very wide range of regions in Aotearoa New Zealand. The great majority, however, represent the northern part of *Te-Ika-a-Māui*, covering an area from Northland to the Waikato, and eastwards into the Bay of Plenty. With very few exceptions, *Te Aurere's* crew members and *wānanga*-participants are of Māori descent.[177] Between 1996 and 1999 (the time frame of my fieldwork), *Te Aurere* had regular participants from *Tai Tokerau* (Northland *iwi*), Auckland, Tauranga, Whakatane, Opotiki, Gisborne, Hamilton, and even as far away as Wellington and Te Waipounamu, the South Island. The initiative and commitment these participants show to the project on a regular basis is truly remarkable. A *waka* demands considerable commitment, not only in terms of time, but also resourcefulness (e.g., cost and time of travel) from its participants. Unfortunately these demands can exclude people who have the desire to participate, but, due to other obligations like work and family, have very narrowly defined limits of time and resources. In the light of these facts it is rather astonishing to consider the distances some members of *Te Aurere whānau* travel to attend a *wānanga* or a sail (short day-trips or overnight-trips on *Te Aurere* are usually very popular). For example, *waka*-enthusiast Tip Reedy and his whānau from Wellington

[177] I joined the project in November 1996 and (with one exception in November 1998) participated in all events and *wānanga* between then and December 1998. During these two years, Piripi Evans (one of *Te Aurere's* two fully-trained navigators) and myself, were the only individuals of non-Māori descent committed to the project.

regularly participated in *Te Aurere*'s *wānanga* between 1997 and 1998 despite all inconveniences.

In its early beginnings, Busby's project gained the support from one particularly dedicated individual, Ben ('Pene') Mamaku from Te Teko (Bay of Plenty). Mamaku is an experienced leader of Māori cultural groups, and has also trained a *waka taua* crew for the 1990 celebrations, paddling *Te Toi o Mataatua*. In 1992 Mamaku came to Northland with part of his cultural group, young Māori men from around Whakatane, and trained the prospective crew for *Te Ika a Māui* and *Te Aurere*. Representatives from Mamaku's area subsequently paddled *Te Ika a Māui* at the Festival of Pacific Arts in Rarotonga. (Busby 1998b: tape 2; pers. comm. Aramoana)

During *Te Aurere*'s and *Te Ika a Māui*'s construction at Aurere between 1991 and 1992, Busby was assisted by eight trainees, "young local guys" financed by Maccess,[178] a Labour Department scheme (Busby 1998a). Without exception, Busby chose his employees from the Kaitaia-region, which enabled him to economise on a single vehicle to take them to and from work (Busby 1998a). All of these helpers were unemployed prior to the building-process. Their involvement with *Te Aurere* (and the *waka taua Te Ika a Māui*) not only provided them with a paid temporary job, but gave them a new focus on their Māori heritage. Busby recalls,

> They were rapt, really, but the trouble was, when it was finished, there was nothing else to keep them on. They were back unemployed again. The *wairua* was there, the spirit was there all right, but it's a pity really. I would have liked to have kept them together. (Busby 1998b)

Towards the end of the project, his young team of helpers not only worked extensive after-hours for weeks on end, but they also committed their weekends in order to get the *waka* finished in time. This considerable commitment of time and energy was especially difficult for some who had families to look after.[179]

[178] Maccess is a marae-based Māori employment program, which has previously funded block courses for activities such as learning traditional carving skills. Overall, according to Busby (1998b: tape1), the wages to fund the eight trainees for the complete building process of *Te Aurere* and *Te-Ika-a-Māui* amounted to about $NZ 40.000 - $NZ 60.000.

[179] Unfortunately the Maccess scheme, limited to twelve months (pers. comm. Busby), ran out before *Te Aurere's* completion, and in the end, despite Busby's promise that the scheme was to be extended another time, his employees committed their time and efforts without any financial return. (pers. comm. Paul LeNoel)

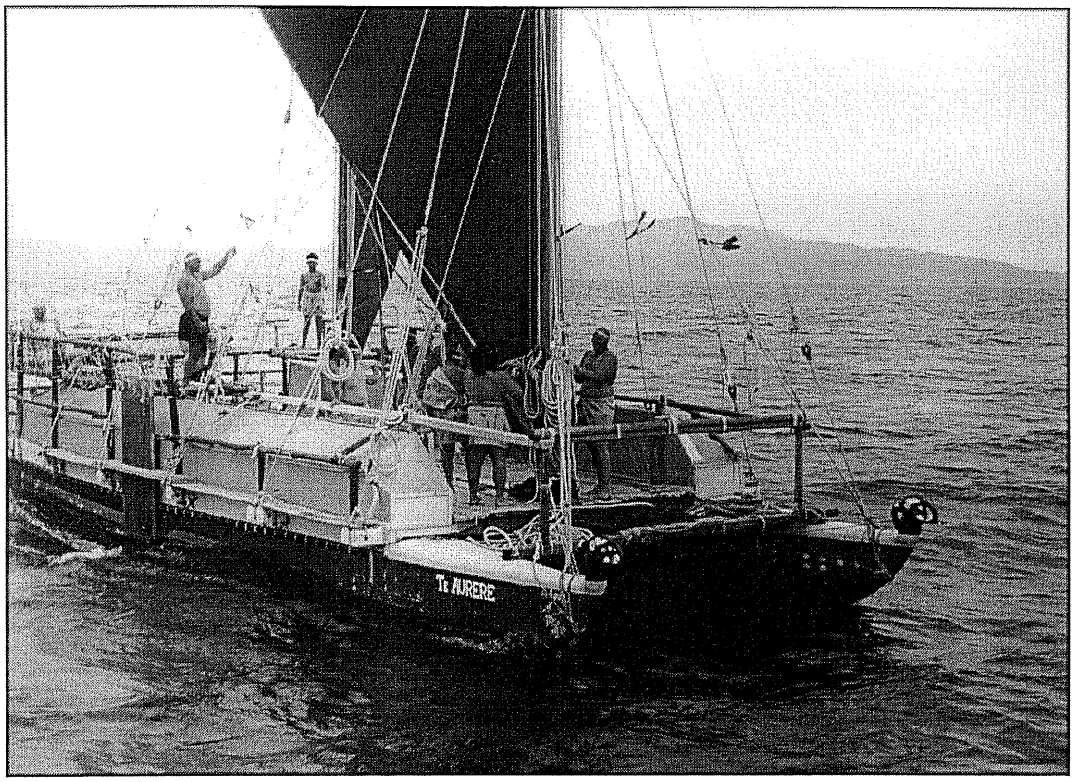

Fig. 4.6. *Off Mangonui Harbour, December 1998: A crew from Te Teko (wearing traditional outfits during a film shoot) adjusting the sails. (Note Hector Busby sitting on the navigator's seat in the far left corner.) (Photograph by author)*

Fig. 4.7. *Hector Busby in his work gear on board Te Aurere. (Photograph by author)*

Chapter Five

Te Aurere: Construction

5.1 Selecting the Trees

The project commenced in 1991, after the Department of Conservation (DOC) consented to the felling of two *kauri* trees[180] in the Herekino State Forest. Each of the giant trees for the twin-hulled *waka* was cut down at a different time (Busby 1995: 4).

5.1.1 Location and balance

Busby had been "schooled up" by his *kaumātua* Taupuhi Eruera in 1978 (Busby 1998a)[181] to select the right trees for building single-hull *waka* (Busby 1998a). Busby (1995:1) explains some of the traditional selection criteria for *waka taua*:

> To pick the trees for the canoes you have to look in certain different areas. For instance, the logs for war canoes needed to be picked from the western side of a ridge - the prevailing winds in the winter time come from the south west and the trees exposed on that side of the ridges get the hammering. That side of the tree, the side that faces the southwest, is heavier. You get more stability in the vessel when the heavy part is on the bottom.

For a single hull vessel the balance within its hull is a significant issue. For example, Busby had to build his last *waka taua*, *Te Ika a Māui*, (which he constructed for the 1992 festival of Pacific Arts) "from the sappy side of the middle section of *Mataatua waka*",[182] because he could not get the permission to fell another tree (Busby 1998b: tape 1). To achieve a sufficient balancing

[180] *Kauri* is renowned for its exceptionally straight and tall growth and its lack of side-branches. As a *kauri* tree is growing, it drops off its side branches, leaving a smooth and straight stem without any knotholes (pers. comm. Claudia Keitel and Deane Harder, botanists). The combination of these factors make *kauri* the ideal building material for large vessels. For instance, Northland *iwi*, such as Ngā Puhi, favoured the use of *kauri* for the construction of their *waka taua* (see Best 1976: 38).

[181] Eruera and Busby had both been involved with the restoration of *Ngatokimatawhaorua* in the 1970s, which was the start of *waka*-building for Busby (Busby 1998b: tape 1). (See 4.3.1.2 this thesis.) According to Williams (1996: 6) there was another significant elder besides "Taupuhi". Busby also watched and listened to his *kaumātua* "Tame Muri" (Williams 1996: 6).

[182] *Mataatua* is the *waka taua* Busby constructed for the 1990 commemorations.

effect with the available material, he experimented with lead. Busby's solution was to insert lead along the bottom, inside *Te Ika a Māui*'s hull, which artificially created enough stability within the hull. In his opinion this invented method worked just as well as using the right side of the tree (Busby 1998b: tape 1). Nevertheless, under more ideal conditions, balancing the canoe is done differently. Busby reveals "the secret of actually getting a canoe nicely balanced" (Busby 1995: 1):

> . . . you mark that [heavier, weather-beaten] side before you knock the tree down, the heart of that tree is usually to one side [instead of the centre of the tree] and the sappy side is towards the rising sun. (Busby 1995: 1)

Subsequently the *tohunga tārai waka* (canoe hewing expert) works with the stronger side of the tree and ignores the sappy side. There is another traditional Māori method to determine the future keel of the *waka*. After the felling, the tree trunk is transported to a nearby water (e.g., a river or a lake), where it can roll. The weight will draw the heavier side towards the bottom, and eventually the rolling trunk will slow down and come to a rest in the perfect position for the future *waka*. The only thing left to do then is to mark the tree in the position it is in. (pers. comm. Busby)

5.1.2 Trees for a *waka hourua*

For the *waka hourua*, as a double-hulled canoe, the issue of balance within one hull is, according to Busby, not as relevant as it is for *waka taua*. Hence, there is no specific preference, such as choosing a tree from the western side of a ridge. *Waka hourua* are much more forgiving. As Busby explains,

> Unlike a war canoe, with the double-hulled canoe you've got two hulls and it [the balance within one hull] doesn't really matter as much. If the heart of tree is in the centre of log it doesn't really matter. You just look at the log and get it as close as you can to the shape of the hull. (Busby 1995: 1)

5.1.3 Busby's final selection

Unfortunately, Busby was not able to find two trees of the same size (Busby 1998b: tape 1). It can be a time-consuming process to find the right trees for a twin-hulled *waka*, if one attempts to have the two hulls as much alike as possible. Preferably they should be of similar size,

weight and structure.[183] The trees Busby chose were fairly close to each other[184] but of a different age and hence size. He remembers looking at their size and knowing, that "[t]hey were the ones" (Busby 1998b: tape 1). Both trees, one closer to 400 years, and the other closer to 500 years old (pers. comm. Busby), were cut down during the summer of 1990/1991. (Busby 1998b: tape 1) Busby was well aware that the ideal time for felling trees, as preserved in Māori traditions, is midwinter.[185] During the wintertime the tree's sap goes down because "the tree goes to sleep" (Busby 1998b: tape 1). But unfortunately, due to the project's time constraints, Busby decided to take the trees down straight away.

5.2 Observing Māori Traditions

The building of a *waka* is a highly *tapu*, or restricted task for Māori. As Busby explains, "*waka* was a very sacred thing to our ancestors . . . the canoe was the vehicle, that brought our ancestors to this land" (Busby 1998b: tape 3). Therefore, as a contemporary *waka*-builder, he felt a responsibility to uphold certain Māori traditions. Referring to traditional *karakia*, rituals and *rāhui*, restrictions which were observed during *Te Aurere*'s construction, Gable (1995: A-10) remarked,

> The passing of vital skills and genealogical information to the youth of today, tomorrow's elders[,] was an essential aspect of this [*Te Aurere*'s] kaupapa. Therefore there was a significant educational aspect involved in the construction of Te Aurere. Every opportunity was taken to teach and learn the skill and knowledge that was required.[186]

5.2.1 Reviving Māori rituals and *karakia*

During stages of the construction, especially those associated with the trees (such as the felling of the selected *kauri* trees), Busby put an emphasis on reviving some of the known rituals, as traditionally performed within Māori societies. Busby proclaims, "[t]he main thing is, to do

[183] Because the characteristics of the wood are strongly influenced by the growing conditions, as described in detail by Whakataka-Brightwell (see 2.4.1 this thesis), these would have to be as similar as possible in order to act as an ideal combination for the twin-hulls. Two trees close to each other would have had fairly similar growing conditions.

[184] Unfortunately, Busby was not able to specify the distance between the trees anymore (pers. comm. Busby).

[185] See also 2.4.2 this thesis.

[186] This comment is debatable. For example, since they predominantly used modern tools and techniques in *Te Aurere*'s construction, there was no reason to recite the *karakia* "used in giving power to the *tokis* or axes to shape the canoe" as well as the "*Karakia* used when the canoe was drawn out of the bush, *to-to-waka*" (Hamilton 1972: 9).

these ceremonies, . . . to take young people up there, let them experience it" (Busby 1998b: tape 3). Today, according to *Te Aurere*'s builder,

> [t]here is probably only three or four people in New Zealand, if that, who know how to do these *karakia*. And, you know, the different stages, there is so many different stages from the time you are going into the bush to the time it is ready to launch. And even *after* the launching is the blue-water sailing. There is ten different stages, just about. (Busby 1998b: tape 3)

Busby recovered essential information and *karakia* from Elsdon Best's (1976) records *The Maori Canoe*, which enabled him to revive a traditional Māori tree-felling ceremony. As he explained to me, the *karakia* were "handed down [to him] through the books" (Busby 1998b: tape 1). [187]

According to Shirres (1997: 64) a *karakia* is a recited "very rapid monotone chant" characterized by an "almost exclusive use of traditional language, symbols and structures". Combined with ritual actions, the *karakia* is often used to loosen or to bind "*atua* spiritual powers[188] to the subject of the ritual" (Shirres 1997: 65).

> *Karakia* are the chants of Maori ritual. They often call on the *atua* and are a means of participation, of becoming one, with the *atua* and the ancestors and with events of the past in the 'eternal present' of ritual. (Shirres 1997: 65)

The most important purpose of *karakia* is, according to Paul Tapsell (1998: 14), to "serve as a channel of communication with the atua who control the power to nourish or destroy the *mauri* [life force] contained within all existing things". In the traditional Māori world, the transformation process from a tree into a *waka* was not only a complicated undertaking on a practical level, but perhaps even more so on a spiritual level. As a consequence of the *tapu* of the canoe, which is linked with Tāne and Tangaroa, certain restrictions apply. For instance "at the cutting down of the tree, the carving of the canoe, its being taken down to the sea and its launching" a whole complex of ritualised actions is required, traditionally performed by a qualified *tohunga* to ensure the blessing of the supernatural world (Shirres 1997: 39). Firstly, it was absolutely essential to go and "ask Tane", the *atua* of the forest and birds, for permission to

[187] The *karakia* used by Busby are obviously derived from a ritual account of a tree-felling ceremony recorded by Elsdon Best (1976: 43-45). (The details of the ceremony had been communicated to Best by Tutakangahau, of Tūhoe.)

take a tree (Busby 1998b). Each little step involved ancient Māori rituals, including the recital of *karakia* and the observance of *tapu* (see, for instance, Shirres 1997; Best 1976; Makereti 1986; Hamilton 1972: 9).

5.2.1.1 *Karakia on voyages*

Karakia on the voyage itself appears to have been a significant aspect of prehistoric Māori voyaging. For example, Agnes Sullivan (1985:53) mentions the use of *karakia* in Wirihana Te Aoterangi's (of Ngati Tahinga of Whaingaroa) account of the *waka Tainui*,[189] such as "a karakia (ritual chant) by which the tohunga (navigating expert) called up the aid of . . . sea monsters for the voyaging canoe".

> Further karakia for the control of a voyaging canoe, having to do with winds, clouds, sea birds, paddling, and bailing, are also listed by Te Aoterangi. The existence of similar karakia devoted to these and other ritual tasks in other East Polynesian areas suggests that karakia as a ritual device reached New Zealand with the initial discoverers.
> (Sullivan 1985: 53)

According to Busby, *karakia* on contemporary voyages, "is one of the most important things out as far as I'm concerned" (Busby 1998b: tape 3). He usually recites *karakia* before and after a voyage. Sometimes Busby recites the *karakia* to himself, whispering the words. But before a pan-Pacific voyage the crew members always gather together, in a big circle on board the *waka* and listen to the recited chant. (Busby 1998b: tape 3)

In 1985 Busby went over to Hawai'i to bless *Hōkūle'a* and her crew with an ancient Māori *karakia* before her departure on the Voyage of Rediscovery (1985 – 1987). The particular *karakia* he used for voyaging is from Ruanui, one of his ancestors that came over on *Ngatokimatawhaorua*. In essence, this *karakia* asks for guidance and safety, requesting the *taniwha* for help. These *taniwha* were released again in a second *karakia* when the *waka* reached its destination (Busby 1998b: tape 1).[190] Though this particular *karakia* is meant for crossing Te Moana Nui a Kiwa, the Pacific ocean, Busby also recites it on trips with *waka taua*.

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[188] Here I have amended the quoted text by omitting a comma, in order to fit it into the grammatical structure of the above sentence.
[189] Sullivan's source is an undated manuscript by Wirihana Te Aoterangi, entitled *No Hawaiki tenei waka*, which is held at the Auckland Institute and Museum (Mead 1985: 243).
[190] In December 1985, Busby recited his *karakia* at *Hōkūle'a*'s arrival off Northland's coast. (See 4.2.2 this thesis)

He explains that there is such a large number of crew (usually around eighty) on *waka taua*, he likes using it in that context as well - "to make sure". (Busby 1998b: tape 1)

5.2.2 Tree Felling Ceremony, Herekino State Forest 1991

Busby recalls, "[o]nce we got their permission, we followed Maori tradition by asking for the logs from Tane, god of the forest" (Busby 1995: 1). Those invited to the ceremony at the Herekino State Forest during the summer of 1990/1991 shared an experience, which very few Māori are still exposed to in the contemporary world. Haare Williams (a former executive director of the 1990 commission) commented:

> One of the great privileges of my life, . . . [w]as the awesomeness, ihi and wehi,[191] of the bush when Hekenukumai [Busby] took us into the Herekino State Forest for the felling of a kauri for the hulls of Te Aurere. (Williams 1996)

The following material is a detailed description of the ceremonial context and the *karakia* performed at one of the selected *kauri* trees, based on a film-recording from the documentary *Kupe: Voyaging by the Stars*,[192] as well as on personal conversations with witnesses, in particular Hector Busby, Paul LeNoel, Ken Busby and Peter Turei (the film-director). Whenever possible, I give a Māori, as well as an English version of the performed *karakia*, the ritual chants. The English version is identical with the subtitles in the film, a translation by Waihoroi Shortland (Turei 1992).

On the day of the felling of one of the selected *kauri* trees a *karakia* was first performed for all participants at the edge of the Herekino State Forest (pers. comm. Busby). Before entering the

[191] To exert *ihi* is, according to Tapsell (1998: 16), to exert "spiritual power" which can cause a "spontaneous physical reaction; . . . to feel an awesome presence". Accordingly, to exert *wehi* is "to strike fear" and "awe" which can physically manifest itself in "spine-tingling" and/or cause someone "to tremble" and "to excite" (Tapsell 1998: 16).

[192] The subtitles in Peter Turei's film *Kupe: Voyaging by the Stars* (Turei 1992) offer an English translation (by Waihoroi Shortland) to the different *karakia*, as they are orally recited in the Māori language. My chapter presents this complete English version, but I have also made an attempt to offer the original Māori words of the chants. Subsequently I found some of the *karakia* recited by Busby in Best (1976) and the Māori version presented here will be marked accordingly. Others needed to be transcribed. It is a difficult task to transcribe spoken Māori from a film-recording into writing as a non-native speaker. It is even more difficult to transcribe the "very rapid monotone chant" of *karakia* with their "almost exclusive use of traditional language, symbols and structures" (Shirres 1997: 64). Here I would like to give my sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr. Michael Reilly for laborious hours spent in front of the TV screen in February 2000. The transcriptions marked "pers. comm. Reilly", are the sole result of his tireless efforts and expertise. The underlined words or three spaced dots mark doubtful parts of the transcription.

realm of Tane it was necessary to seek permission from the supernatural world. Upon reaching the tree, the ceremony began with Busby reciting the following *karakia*:

[Busby:][193]
Let your prow know the stars to follow
As the sweeping tide rests
Raising one to a fleeting Orion
Aligning with the lesser of Magellan's clouds
As the moon appears on the horizon
Then I too will complete the crossing.
(Turei 1992)

[second *kaumātua*:]
E te matua atawhai [?]
E to matou matua te rangi
E Io nui, Io roa
Io taketake, Io wānanga
Io Matua kore
Nāu nei nga mea katoa i hanga
Te rangi me te whenua me ona mea katoa

Ahakoa a Tane nāu i tuku mai
Te mana ki a ia
Hei tiaki i ngā ahuatanga o te ngahere
Tēnei mātou e te matua nui te rangi te huihui nei
Tēnei rā ka inoi atu [?] *ki a koe*
Kia tukuna te mana ki a Tane
Kia aroha mai ki a matou
Ka haere mai nei ki te tiki
I ētahi o ona tamariki
(pers. comm. Reilly)

Our father who resides in heaven
Io the eternal, Io the ancient
Io the purveyor of knowledge,
Io the parentless one
You who created all things.
Heaven and earth
And all that dwells therein
To whom you gave dominion
To reign over the forest
We come before you
Gathered as we are this day
To ask that you appeal to Tane

[193] Unfortunately Dr. Reilly could not offer a Māori transcription of this particular *karakia* due to the speed and lack of clarity of the words as recited by Busby (see Turei 1992).

To look kindly upon us
On this quest
For one of his children.
(Turei 1992)

[third *kaumātua*:]
Tihei mauri ora
E te kingi e Tane Mahuta
I poka tou pae koe ki runga rawa [?]
I te nuinga o nga rakau ki te ngahere
Ka hue na koe [?] *e kingi*
Mo ngā uri katoa
O te hunga o te hunga wairoa
E noho ana ki raro ki te maru o tou ata . . . [?]
(pers. comm. Reilly)

Tihei mauri ora.
Tane Mahuta,
Majesty that you are
Reigning as you do over
all the trees of the forest
Installed to have domain
over the spirits of all
that dwell within your shadow.
(Turei 1992)

[First *kaumātua*; Busby:]
He ao pukapuka
He ao mahamaha
He toki henahena
He toki ta wahie
Ka pa ki tua, ka pa ki waho, ka pa ki a Tane
(Best 1976: 43) [194]

An impatient world
an anxious world
An unused axe
It flies out ... to beyond
It bites into Tane.
(Turei 1992)

This last *karakia* accompanied the first stroke with the axe into the stem of the tree. Subsequently the tree was cut down using chainsaws. After it hit the forest floor, a fire was lit with the first chips coming off the stem. The smoke going up from the fire and its ashes were an

[194] The last line, taken from Best (1976: 43), has been interchanged by Busby to: "*Ka pa ki waho, ka pa ki tua, ka pa ki a Tane*" (Turei 1992).

offering to Tane. Hereafter another fire was lit, again using the chips from the tree. This second fire was used for the ceremonial cooking of food, which was subsequently eaten by all participants to protect them from *tapu*. Busby performed the following two *karakia*:

> [Busby, *addressing the fire*:]
> *Ka hika i te ihi o Tane*
> *Ka hika i te marutuna o Tane*
> *Ka hika i te maruwehi o Tane*
> *Ka hika i te pukapuka o Tane*
> *Ka hika i te mahamaha o Tane*
> (Best 1976: 44)[195]
>
> Let it be kindled
> By the power of Tane
> Kindled by the rites of Tane
> Kindled by the eagerness of Tane
> Kindled by the might of Tane
> Set alight by the emotions of Tane.
> (Turei 1992)
>
> [Busby:]
> *Ka mau tatua mau wawe I te ata hapara*
> *Ka ma nga pukenga*
> *Ka ma nga wānanga*
> *Ka ma hoki matau, enei tauira.*
> (Best 1976: 44)[196]
>
> We are bound, caught by the breath of dawn
> easing recall of past knowledge,
> giving access to lore
> and we are enlightened by this teaching.
> (Turei 1992)

The food representing the land and the sea, in this case *kūmara* (sweet potato) and fish, was shared amongst the participants. The last pieces of the food were placed on the tree-stump as the final act of removing the *tapu* from the tree. (Turei 1992)

[195] These lines are taken from a chant of the *ahi purakau*, a fire in which food will be cooked "for the purpose of taking the *tapu* off" (Best 1976: 44).

[196] These lines are taken from a *taumaha* ritual (Best 1976: 44), which is chanted over a portion of the cooked food. Best (1976: 44) writes about this ritual:

> This [*taumaha* rite] not only completes the lifting of the *tapu* from the food, the work, and workmen, but also acts as a *pou* (to support and impart energy to the workmen); it wards off evil influences and sickness, or misfortune; it prevents workmen becoming listless or unduly wearied. It also renders them intelligent and clear-minded in regard to their work, and it pertains to Tane.

5.2.3 "No woman on waka site!"

During the time when the *waka* was built, Busby observed some of the traditional restrictions he considered as important. A sign with the words "No woman on waka site!" (in capital letters), still to be found in the former building shed, is a visual reminder of the times, when *Te Aurere* was in the process of being completed.[197] As Busby explains,

> There are traditions that go along with the selection of the place where the canoe is going to be built. In the old days, our ancestors only allowed certain people to go anywhere near the area where a canoe was being constructed. They believed that their lives were at stake, and I've been told by some of the elders if a rule was broken and a women [sic] got inside the area where a canoe was being built, they would just vacate the project and go start again. That's how serious it was. So that's one rule I've made sure was carried on. (Busby 1995: 2)

This is a rule he also observed during the construction of the two *waka taua* he built. In retrospect he remarks,

> With the three canoes that I've built [*Mataatua, Te Ika a Māui* and *Te Aurere*] I have not allowed any women to come close. It's just a matter of respect for the elders. If we couldn't stick to one of their traditions. . . . All the women who come to the sight [sic: site] must stay outside the boundary. Once I explain why I want to hold that particular rule, they understand. (Busby 1995: 2)

5.2.4 *Te Aurere*'s *haka*

On special occasions, such as the departure or arrival from a voyage, or on significant cultural occasions within New Zealand, such as the opening of Te Papa Tongarewa (as described in the prelude to this thesis), *Te Aurere*'s predominantly male crew participates in the customary exchange of *haka*. Busby (1995: 8) asserted, that "[a]ll our [Māori] 'boys' want to learn about how the ancestors (did things/came here). You can see it when they perform their *haka*, they really turn it on and call on the *ihi* of our ancestors".

---

[197] Traditionally, the building site as well as the men making the *waka* are *tapu*, because the construction of a waka is an activity associated with *tīpuna* and *atua*. In most ceremonial contexts food as well as women can be used to lift a *tapu* by going through *whakanoa* ceremonies (involving one or the other, or a combination of both). The powerful association of most women with *noa* is the reason for their restricted access to *tapu* activities. But once the project is completed and the *tapu* lifted, these restrictions do not have to be applied anymore.
In this context it is interesting to note, that I was allowed to visit the building site of Whakataka-Brightwell's *waka taua* in 1990, *despite* the fact that I am a woman (see 2.1.1 this thesis).

During some of the *wānanga* I participated in between 1996 and 1998,[198] Jack Thatcher put great effort into teaching the words and movements of *Te Aurere*'s *haka*. Performance of this *haka* is seen as a vital cultural part of being a crew member. During one of our practice sessions, I recorded the words of this *haka* (pers. comm. Thatcher; *Te Aurere wānanga* 17-19 January 1997, Ngararatunua *marae* in Kamo, Whangarei) and of course I was keen to understand their meaning. The information I was given about the *haka* hinted at the fact that it is very special and old and that it needed to be contextualised within Māori history and tradition, in order to fully understand its meanings (pers. comm. Aramoana). It wasn't until much later that I discovered these exact same words (apart from the ending, see below) in an ancient *karakia* recorded by Bruce Biggs (1957: 230; cited in Shirres 1997: 91-92). Hence, *Te Aurere*'s *haka* appears to be an adaption of an original *karakia* version, about which Shirres (1997: 91) made the following remark:

> [This] Ngaapuhi *karakia* is said to have been used by Nukutawhiti on his arrival in the Hokianga harbour. With its references to Marerei-ao and Taotao-rangi, places in Hawaiki, and to the spiritual powers Taane and Tangaroa, it takes on a cosmic significance. So to live with this *karakia* is to live as part of the cosmos.

These are the words of the *karakia* and their English translation, which are identical with the *Te Aurere*'s *haka*:[199]

E kau ki te tai e, e kau ki te tai e,
E kau raa, e Taane.
Waahia atu raa te ngaru hukahuka o Marerei-ao
Pikitia atu te aurere kura o Taotao-rangi.
Tapatapa ruru ana te kaukau o te hoe,
E auheke ana, e tara tutu ana te huka o Tangaroa
I te puhi whatukura, i te puhi marei kura o taku waka.
Ka titiro iho au ki te pae o uta, ki te pae o waho.
Piki tuu rangi ana te kaukau o te hoe;
Kumea te uru o taku waka
Ki runga ki te kiri waiwai o Papa-tuu-a-nuku
E takoto mai nei;
Ki runga ki te uru tapu nui o Taane
E tuu mai nei.
Whatiwhati rua ana te hoe a Pou-poto,
Tau ake ki te hoe naa Kura, he ariki whatu manawa.

[198] See chapter 6.6.2 this thesis about *Te Aurere*'s *wānanga*.
[199] To be precise, there is a slight difference between the two versions: There are several instances in Thatcher's *haka* version, when "a" is used instead of "o" (as depicted in the *karakia* version above). I left these instances unmarked. Surely, *Te Aurere*'s crew members will notice a difference.

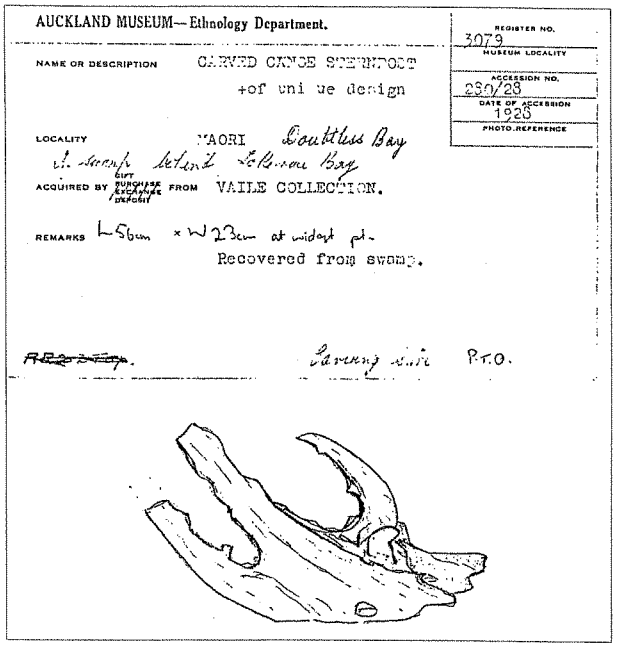
Too manawa, e Kura, ki taku manawa;
Ka irihia, ka irihia ki Wai-o-nuku,
Ka irihia, ka irihia ki Wai-o-rangi,
Ka whiti au ki te whei ao, ki te ao maarama.

Swim on the sea, swim on the sea,
Swim now, oh Taane.
Split the foamy waves of Marerei-ao;
Ascend the sacred current of Taotao-rangi.
The foam of Tangaroa is standing in crests, is descending
On the sacred plumes of my canoe,
I look down on the inner and outer rows of surf.
The handle of the paddle is lifted to the sky,
The head of my canoe is pulled forward
Onto the skin of mother earth lying here,
With the sacred head of Taane standing above.
The paddle of Pou-poto breaks in two.
And the paddle of Kura is taken,
A great chief and high-priest, of very great heart.
Your heart, oh Kura, bound to my heart,
Lifted, lifted up in the waters of the earth
Lifted, lifted up in the waters of the heavens
I cross the mortal world, to the world of light.
(Biggs 1957: 230; cited in Shirres 1997: 91-92)

From here onwards the *haka* differs from the *karakia* cited above, and proceeds as follows:

Kua tae ra
Kua tae ra
Tukua matou ki a piri
Tukua matou ki a tata
Ki Papatuanuku e takoto nei
Ka tu te ihi ihi, ka tu te wanawana
Ki runga i te rangi e tu iho nei
e tu iho nei[200]
(pers. comm. Thatcher)

200 Arrived
Arrived
Allowed us to embrace
Allowed us nearby
To Papatuanuku lying here
The spiritual powers and the sense of awesomeness arise
Upward to the skies set above
Set above
(pers. comm. Reilly)


AUCKLAND MUSEUM—Ethnology Department.

REGISTER NO. 3079
MUSEUM LOCALITY
ACCESSION NO. 280/28
DATE OF ACCESSION 1928
PHOTO. REFERENCE

NAME OR DESCRIPTION CARVED CANOE STERNPOST
+of uni ue design

LOCALITY MAORI Doubtless Bay
N. Auckl Island Tokerau Bay

ACQUIRED BY GIFT PURCHASE EXCHANGE DEPOSIT FROM VAILE COLLECTION.

REMARKS L 56cm × W 23cm at widest pt.
Recovered from swamp.

Fig. 5.1. *The only available record of the Doubtless Bay taurapa (AIM artefact Nr. 3079), an artefact recovered from the same site as the Doubtless Bay tauiho (Fig. 5.4). (Courtesy of Roger Neich)*

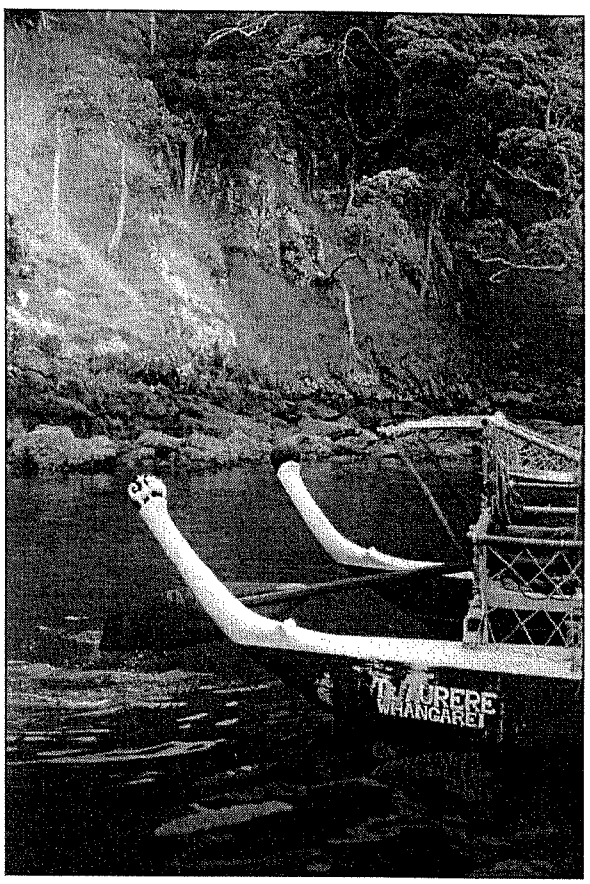


Fig. 5.2. *Te Aurere's taurapa, actually modelled after the carved sternpost of a waka teitei (AIM artefact Nr. 35570; not depicted). (Photograph by author)*

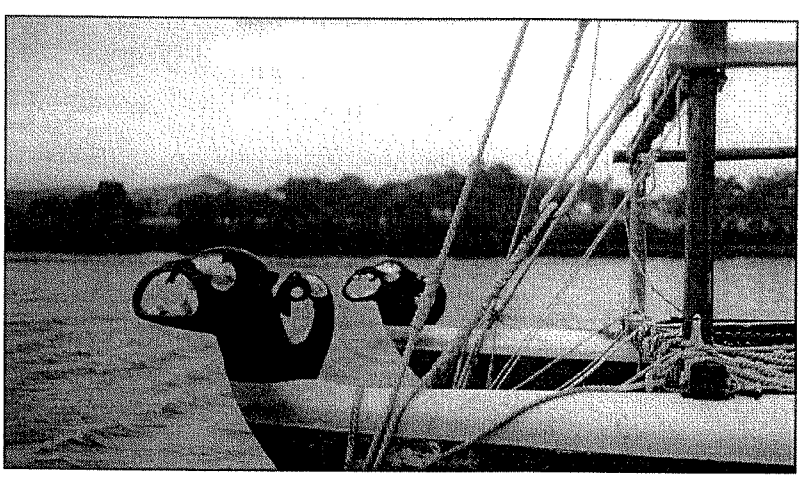


Fig. 5.3

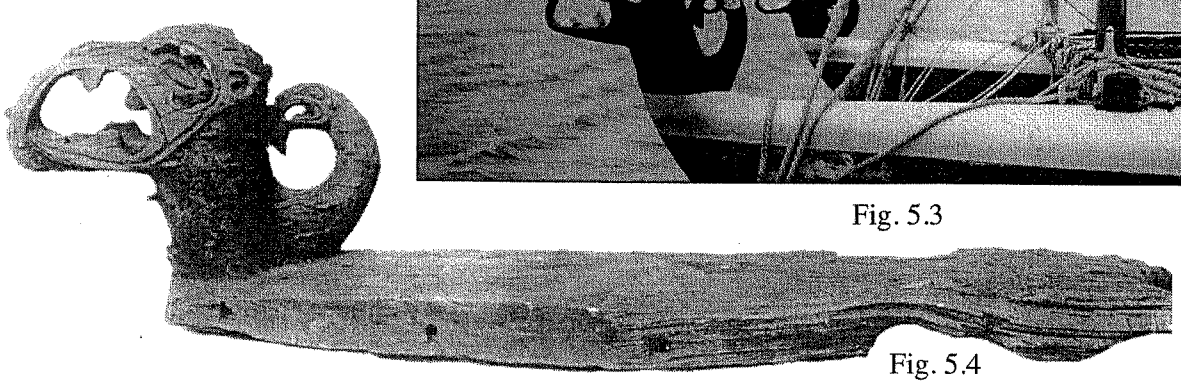


Fig. 5.4

Fig. 5.3 & Fig. 5.4. *Te Aurere's tauiho (Fig. 5.3 [photograph by author]), modelled after the Doubtless Bay tauiho (Fig. 5.4 [Barrow 1969: 26]; AIM artefact Nr. 3078)*

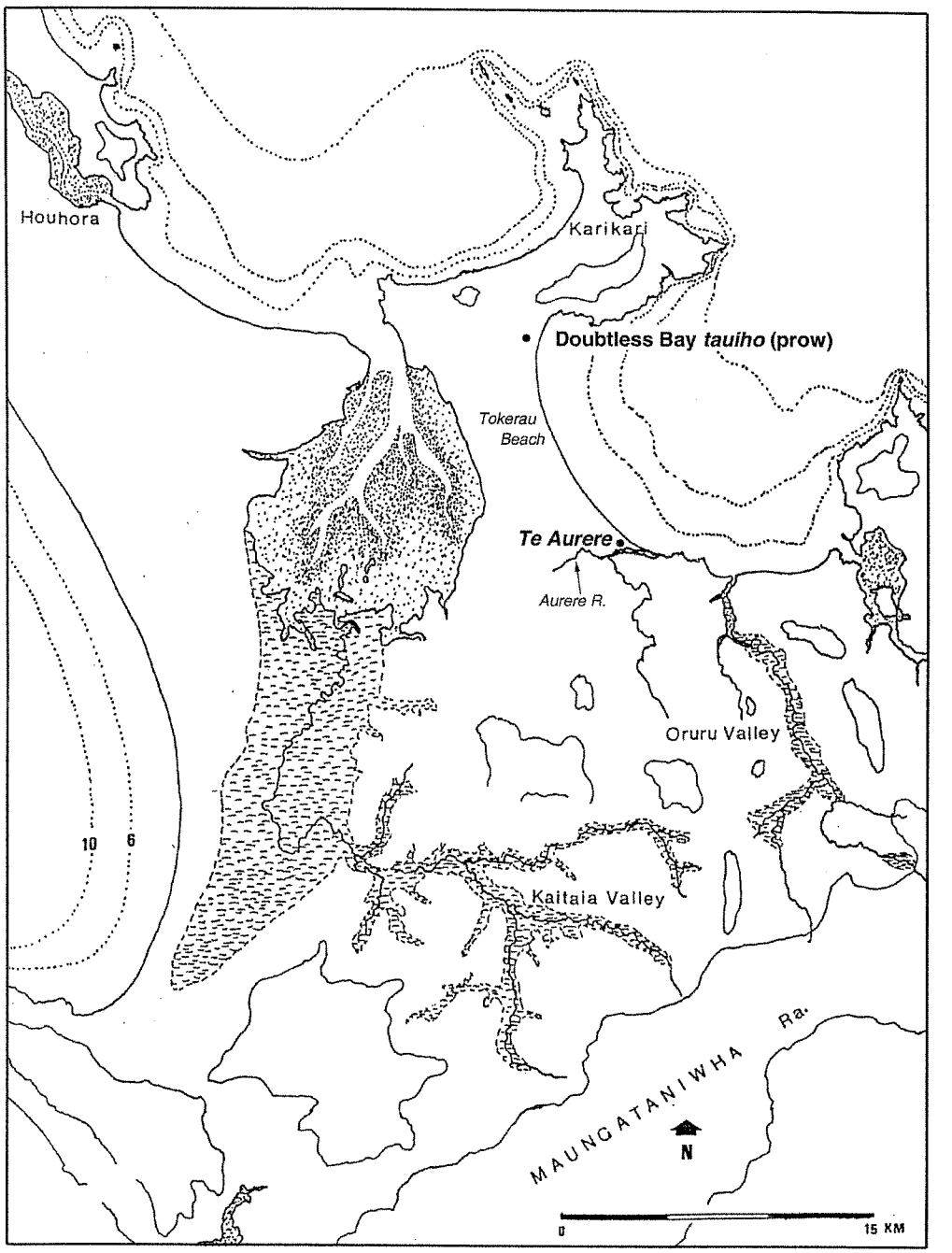


Fig. 5.5. *Tokerau Beach, Doubtless Bay: Te Aurere's building site at Aurere river and the place where the ancient tauiho and taurapa (AIM artefacts Nr. 3078 and 3079) were discovered.*

279/28	Carved caure prow + Sternpost of unique design.	3078 3079
	Ko and Cong poles. Recovered from a Swamp	3080 3681 +/- .4
280/28	Pres: Kaitaia Collection	

Fig. 5.6. *A "carved caure [kauri] prow and sternpost of unique design", as recorded in the original Museum books (AIM artefacts Nr. 3078 and 3079). (Courtesy of Roger Neich, AIM)*

5.2.5 *Tauiho* and *taurapa*

Te Aurere's only carvings, adorning her *tauiho*, or bow, (Fig. 5.3) and *taurapa*, or stern, (Fig. 5.2) are modelled after existing ancient artefacts from the Te Tipunga period (1200-1500), a carved canoe bow cover and a sternpost held at the Auckland Institute and Museum (hereafter AIM) (Simmons 1985: 177f.). Based on information about these two artefacts in a book Busby had a look at to inform himself about Māori carvings, he assumed that these *taonga* had both been discovered at the same site, in a swamp nearby Tokerau beach, and belonged to the same canoe.[201] He was compelled to model the *tauiho* and *taurapa* of his contemporary *waka hourua* after these *taonga*, because *Te Aurere* was to be built near the place of the artefacts' discovery, at Aurere, Tokerau Beach (Fig. 5.5).[202] (Busby 1998a)

5.2.5.1 *Taniwha: Te Aurere's guardians*

During a private ceremony inside the AIM's storage vault Busby, accompanied by some of his trainees, ritually asked the historic artefacts of a *tauiho* and a *taurapa* to become the *kaitiaki*, the guardian spirits of the future canoe. *Taonga* are *tapu* in the Māori world and are believed to contain strong spiritual powers (Tapsell 1997, 1998). When looking at the *tauiho* (Fig. 5.4), representing a *taniwha*, for the first time at the museum in 1991, Busby averted his gaze out of respect to his *tipuna*. He then recited the following chant in *te reo* Māori:

> The treasures lying here,
> should become the guardians
> of the waka we are building
> because they were discovered
> where the waka is being built.
> (Turei 1992)[203]

[201] Unfortunately Busby could not recall the title or author of the book, but perhaps it could have been *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections*, edited by Sidney Moko Mead (1985). David Simmons' (1985: 178) caption to the image of the *taurapa* reads: "This sternpost was found not far from the Doubtless Bay prow . . . and may be from the same canoe."

[202] I am aware of one other example of a contemporary replica of a voyaging waka, where the builders copied the design of the "prowheads" from an ancient original (McCarthy 1992a: 75). In this case, which has been reported from the island of Mitiaro in the outer Cook Islands, the artefacts had been "lying well preserved under an old house" (McCarthy 1992a: 75). The prowheads were "unearthed" for a culturally significant event, serving as models for the community's "vaka", which was to represent the island at the 1992 Festival of Pacific Arts (McCarthy 1992a: 75). If verified, this could also be an example of how *taonga* of tribal significance are hidden away, while the knowledge of their whereabouts can be preserved over several generations within a local community.

[203] English version according to the subtitles

Simmons (1985: 177) describes the carving on the original artefact as a "dragon-like figure . . . [which] has some Polynesian features but also foreshadows the manaia (profile/figure) of later Maori carving". The design of *Te Aurere*'s *tauiho* (Fig. 5.3), featuring two beaked and toothed heads, represents a *taniwha* to its builders. In the traditional Māori world, *taniwha* are believed to have been called on by *tohunga* to guide and protect the waka on their long voyages across Te Moana Nui a Kiwa. Busby (1995: 3) explains, that "the bow fitting [*tauiho*] is suppose [sic] to clear a path, for the canoe".[204] *Te Aurere*'s *taurapa* is of quite a different design. Busby (1995: 3) observes, "there's only one side that's carved, facing outwards and guarding the canoe. Same with carving on war canoes, keep all the monsters away!"

5.2.5.2 *About the artefacts*

Formerly part of the E. E. Vaile Collection, a "(c)arved canoe prow and sternpost of unique design" (Fig. 5.6), recovered from a swamp at Tokerau beach (the northern end of Doubtless Bay) (Fig. 5.5), were donated to the AIM in 1928. No more details about these artefacts have been recorded in the original museum records (pers. comm. Roger Neich).

I intended to recover more information, wondering if there were any details available, which could reveal how closely the *tauiho* and *taurapa* were actually related to each other. Could they be from the same waka? Could they perhaps even be 'the real thing', carvings from an ancient Māori voyaging *waka*? Hence, in November 1996, I arranged to meet with Roger Neich at the AIM in Auckland. After having a close look at the carvings, which were held in the Museum's storage at the time, I asked Neich if he would be able to show me the original museum records. I was confused (from my layperson's point of view) by the carvings' apparently different styles, the different colours of the wood, their different sizes, and so forth. Looking more closely, I noticed the *tauiho*'s and *taurapa*'s assigned numbers. The museum keeps track of its artefacts by numbering each piece at its arrival. Hence, as in this particular case, artefact number 3078 (Fig. 5.4), the Doubtless Bay *tauiho*, must have obviously arrived a long time before artefact number 35570 (not depicted), the presumed Doubtless Bay *taurapa*, that I was looking at. The difference between the numbers was striking. My investigation, with Neich's helpful assistance, revealed a mistake on behalf of the museum. The artefacts, which had been exhibited

[204] For the same purpose the *waka taua* "have big eyes to clear the path" (Busby 1995: 3).

together as Doubtless Bay artefacts, were the Doubtless Bay prow (artefact number 3078), and, as the original museum records revealed, an artefact identified as "river canoe stern piece"[205] (artefact number 35570). The original Doubtless Bay prow and sternpost are listed as number 3078 and 3079 in the museum records (Fig. 5.6). Hence, a different sternpost than the original finding had accidentally been understood to be one of the pieces found in Doubtless Bay. In contrast to the beautifully preserved Doubtless Bay *tauiho*, the actual *taurapa* from Tokerau Beach (Fig. 5.1) was so badly damaged, that it has never been exhibited (pers. comm. Neich).

5.2.5.3 *Conclusion*

The sternpost, that was actually used as a model for *Te Aurere*'s *taurapa*, is identified in the museum's original records as part of a *waka teitei* (river canoe). Furthermore it obviously comes from a different finding and context, many years after the original Doubtless Bay prow and sternpost had been donated to the museum. For unknown reasons these pieces had been mistakenly linked together. Therefore the carvings that were carefully copied for *Te Aurere* are not, as believed by Busby, from the same source at Tokerau Beach. A completely unrelated carving from a *waka teitei*, a Māori river canoe, accidentally served as a model for the *Te Aurere*'s *taurapa* (Fig. 5.2). In conclusion, *Te Aurere*'s prow and sternpost carvings are copied from ancient artefacts, which are not only from different findings, but also appear to belong to different types of Māori waka. The *tauiho* could belong to a seagoing *waka* (pers. comm. Roger Neich) while the *taurapa* stems from a *waka teitei*, a river canoe. Hence, the carvings which served as models for *Te Aurere*'s *tauiho* and *taurapa* would seem to be entirely unrelated.

5.2.6 *Te Aurere*: Brief history of a name

Originally Busby, with tribal affiliations to Te Rarawa and Ngāti Kahu, wished to name his *waka hourua* after the *waka tīpuna*, *Mamari*, his ancestral canoe of Ngāti Kahu (Busby 1998a). "[T]he return journey in the wake of tipuna in the waka Mamari" had been a longheld desire for Busby, for the *Mamari,* captained by Ruanui, is said to have made landfall at Tokerau Beach (Doubtless Bay). She later returned to Hawaiki from the same place (Williams 1996: 6).[206]

[205] Cited from original museum record (author's notes).

[206] According to another source of Tai Tokerau traditions, the *Mamari*, captained by Ruanui, voyaged to Aotearoa together with *Nga Toki-mata-wha-o-rua*, captained by Nuku-tawhiti. Following Kupe's sailing directions both *waka* are believed to be "one of the earliest migration waka" and made landfall at Hokianga (Evans 1997: 80). *Mamari* is said to have been wrecked on Riripo Beach ["thereafter named Omamari" (Evans

Busby's family land and bach on the northern side of the outlet of the river Aurere are located at the same location, at Tokerau Beach. Due to its connection with the *waka*, *Mamari*, the building site of *Te Aurere* will henceforth be referred to as an "historic site" (Williams 1996: 6). In accordance with Māori protocol, Busby consulted his *kaumātua* (tribal elders) about his wish to name the *waka hourua* in progress after *Mamari*. But the *kaumātua* did not approve of the idea (Busby 1996)[207] Subsequently, Busby decided to name his *waka hourua*, *Te Aurere*, after the place where it was built.

Te Aurere Beach is at the southwestern side of the river's outlet, bordering on Tokerau Beach, on the northern side of the outlet of the river, Aurere. The building site is also significant for an historical reason. The ancient canoe prow, after which *Te Aurere's tauiho* was modelled, had been recovered from a swamp, not far from Busby's bach (Fig. 5.5; Busby 1998a).[208] Etymologically, the word *Aurere* is appropriate as a *waka* name for it is made up of two words - "*Au*", meaning "fog" or "mist"; and "*rere*", meaning "to fly" (Busby 1998a). *Te Aurere* has been translated as "flying wake" (e.g., in the program of the *Smokefree Waka Ama Nationals 1997 Whangarei* [*SWAN 1997*]) or as "the Flying Spray" (e.g., Finney 1999: 1). Both these meanings refer to the speed of a vessel.

5.3 The Construction

Work commenced after the *kauri* logs' arrival at Busby's work shop at Aurere, Tokerau Beach (Doubtless Bay) in January 1991 (Gable 1995: A-9). Just like Whakataka-Brightwell, Busby decided that he could not wait for the wood to season. His aim was to complete the *waka* in time to sail it to Rarotonga and participate in the Festival of the Pacific Arts in October 1992.[209] Hence, Busby and his eight Tai Tokerau trainees started cutting the first log without any further delay. Working together they completed this double-hulled sailing *waka* in "just eleven months"

1997: 81)] while exploring the West Coast. (For a longer version and references to primary sources see Evans 1997: 79-81.)

[207] From a conservative viewpoint it can be regarded as a considerable risk to use the sacred name of an ancient *waka tīpuna* for a type of seagoing vessel, which has not been tested by Māori in centuries. If a project like this fails, which is always a possibility, the embarrassment would hereafter be connected with their sacred ancestral name; and so, lessen its *mana*.

[208] For further details see 5.2.5 this thesis.

[209] See chapter 6.3.1 this thesis.

beginning in January 1991 (Gable 1995: A-9).[210] *Te Aurere* was launched on January 12 in the following year.

5.3.1 Pan-Pacific expert help

Robert Gable, one of the key-people responsible for the organisation of *Te Aurere* project, acknowledged the "[o]ngoing assistance . . . provided by the Polynesian Voyaging Society", and especially comments on their "willingness to share information", which "proved an invaluable resource at every stage of the project" (Gable 1995: A-10). From the *waka hourua*'s construction, its sea trials and the first voyage, Busby's project received considerable support from Micronesia and Hawai'i. During construction in 1991, Satawalese (Caroline Islands) master navigator and expert boat-builder, Mau Piailug, and Hawai'ian navigator Nainoa Thompson, Piailug's former student, came to Doubtless Bay in New Zealand. Mau Piailug supported the Māori project with his expertise from its construction stages onwards, well before the launching of the vessel in January 1992 (pers. comm. Ken Busby and Paul LeNoel). The Micronesian all-round *waka*-expert assisted *Te Aurere's* construction in numerous practical ways, such as adzing and lashing. During the three months of his stay, he made a genuine effort to share his Micronesian skills, such as lashing techniques, to anyone interested. For example, Paul LeNoel, working alongside Piailug while lashing *Te Aurere*'s hulls (pers. comm. LeNoel), learned exceptional skills from a first-hand traditional source. Up to this day, LeNoel's experience and skills in traditional Micronesian lashing techniques are unique in Aoteraoa. Nainoa Thompson, from the PVS in Hawai'i, also paid regular visits to Aurere, and conducted numerous workshops to train potential future crew members.[211] Due to his better command of the English language, Thompson (and not Piailug) taught the basic principles of non-instrumental navigation techniques (which he himself had acquired from master navigator Mau Piailug over past years), to a mostly inexperienced Māori crew. According to Gable (1995: A-10), the "[t]raining in traditional navigational methods with Hekenukumai Busby and Stanley Conrad . . . commenced during 1990 and . . . [continued] with assistance from Nainoa Thompson and Mau Piailug".

[210] In comparison, Whakataka-Brightwell, who hand-adzed most of his waka *Hawaiki Nui*, spent five and a half years to complete the carvings (see Part One this thesis). Other than the Maccess scheme (to pay the trainees' wages), Hec Busby relied on his own resources.

[211] The expense of Thompson's airfares was paid for through a participation fee (varying between NZ$ 80 - NZ$ 100 per person) for each workshop (pers. comm. Piripi Evans).

> The training involved celestial navigation, the basics of determining direction at sea, targeting landfall from visual clues, use of the star and canoe compass, canoe sailing skills, safety, and land and sea survival. At all stages in the training emphasis is placed on traditional values in regard to conservation and commitment to Kaupapa Waka. (Gable 1995: A-10)

Between April and September 1992, eight workshops were held at Aurere (Newsletter Nga Waka 1992).[212] In the end, the local New Zealand crew members for *Te Aurere's* first voyage were selected from amongst these participants.

5.4 *Te Aurere*'s design

5.4.1 Hawai'ian plans

"The Hawai'ians", as Busby likes to refer to some of the responsible people from the PVS he has been in touch with over the years (such as Nainoa Thompson and his father, 'Pinky' Thompson), made detailed plans of their first voyaging canoe replica, the *Hōkūle'a*, available to the Māori project. Busby remarks, "I did have a plan that the Hawai'ians gave me, but our trees weren't big enough" (Busby 1995: 2-3). Therefore, in Busby's opinion, the Hawai'ian plan "wasn't much good, really" (Busby 1998b: tape 1). He concludes, "you can't actually draw a design 'til *after* you get the logs" (Busby 1998b: tape 1).

According to David Lewis (cited in *PWMS 1996*: 21), the underwater lines of *Hōkūle'a*'s hulls are basically Polynesian, while "the upper part is more modern Hawaiian". He remarks,

> [T]he underwater lines [of *Hōkūle'a*] were the ones we got from Cook [and] we found that the proportions of the *tongiaki* in Tonga and the Tahitian *pahi* were virtually the same. . . . Those lines are not all that different from *Te Aurere* . . .
> (Lewis cited in *PWMS 1996*: 21)

Over the years of my fieldwork, Busby remained vague about how he solved particular details of the *waka hourua*'s design. His access to detailed information on *Hōkūle'a*'s design (Busby 1996) appears to have been more influential than he would openly admit. A majority of details

[212] According to Gable (1995: A-10), the crew training "started in the latter part of 1990 and continued through to their departure in September 1992".

on board *Te Aurere* accord almost exactly with the plans for the *Hōkūle'a*.[213] No doubt the length of time Busby has been involved in the project meant that the precise origins of information on details such as rigging, the design of the maststeps and so on, had become blurred or difficult to recollect.

5.4.2 Busby's dreams

Sometimes the solution to a problem he encountered during the construction phase would come to Busby in his dreams. The late John Rangihau reminded him once that his ancestors were not far away. As a Māori saying goes, *whakatua te po*, 'the night talks to you'. Today, Busby is convinced that his ancestors helped him in his endeavour by passing on advice to him in his dreams. This, he believes, is not only true for his Māori *tīpuna*, but also for the other, the Pākehā side of his ancestry. Busby is convinced that he also received help in his dreams from his Scottish greatgrandfather, as he had built two schooners in his lifetime.[214] (Busby 1996)

5.4.3 Traditional materials

The traditional building materials of *Te Aurere* are mainly native New Zealand timber. *Te Aurere's* platform as well as the railings are constructed out of *kahikatea* (*Podocarpus excelsium*, or white pine). The masts are made from *tānekaha* (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*), "a very strong but flexible wood used for fishing rods", and *kauri* (*Agathis australis*) (Busby1995: 3). *Tānekaha* has also been used for the spar. In her first year, apart from her *kauri* hulls, *Te Aurere* also had three steering paddles made from *kauri* (LeNoel Papers). These were later replaced by a much larger single paddle.[215] A new mast made from Oregon Pine (pers. comm. LeNoel) replaced the front mast, the top of which broke off when we sailed *Te*

[213] For a detailed plan of *Hōkūle'a*, see the Polynesian Voyaging Society website (PVS-website: *Hokulea.gif*).
[214] Unfortunately Busby could not recall any detailed examples on this matter at the time we discussed this in 1996 and again in 1998. Overall, his belief in some sort of fate or spiritual guidance in various matters concerning his involvement with the *waka* has a great significance to him. For example, in March 1997, a few weeks before our proposed voyage to the Norfolk Islands, Busby had an accident (fortunately he was unharmed), driving his car into a Norfolk Pine between Mangonui and Aurere. In retrospect, he interpreted that incident as a warning, as the voyage to the Norfolk Islands, scheduled for April 1997, had to be postponed (and later that year the trip was cancelled altogether) "due to unfavourable weather patterns" (*He Panui*, 4 March 1997). As New Zealand was repeatedly affected by cyclones in 1997, Busby reaffirmed the connection between his close encounter with a Norfolk Pine and, in retrospect, the considerable dangers that would have been involved in such a voyage at the time. (pers. comm. Busby)
[215] The steering system was changed after *Te Aurere's* return from her maiden voyage to Rarotonga in 1992 (see 5.8.2.1 this thesis).

Aurere in the Tasman Sea in February 1998 (on our way to the opening of the new National Museum), due to the wood rotting inside.

Wood needs to be cared for, especially when it suffers from constant exposure to wind, weather, salt-water and the harsh sun of the Southern hemisphere, as is the case with *Te Aurere*. Those parts of the *waka* lacking a protective layer of paint need to be especially looked after - preferably on a regular basis. This is an absolute necessity in order to prevent the wood from drying out, cracking and rotting away. For example, in preparation for an upcoming journey, a handful of crew members and myself coated the exposed wood with linseed oil and patched up the hulls with additional paint. Repeating such a treatment on a regular basis contributes considerably to the lifetime of this precious material.

5.4.4 Concessions to the 20th century

5.4.4.1 *Compliance with offshore regulations*

Busby made numerous concessions to the 20th century. First and foremost, Busby had to comply with the New Zealand's Yachting Federation's requirements. He remarks, that "a lot of our old [Māori] people don't realize just to have Category One (to get port clearance [to] go offshore), you gotta have . . . all that . . . [modern equipment] whether you use it or not" (Busby 1995: 9). In August 1992 *Te Aurere* "underwent a Marine Survey" to become "a New Zealand registered vessel" (Gable 1995: A-10). She has a small 25 horsepower motor on board, which is an obligatory piece of equipment for negotiating harbours in New Zealand as well as other countries.[216] Furthermore, "[w]e generate electricity the same way as yachts - with a generator and two solar panels" (Busby 1995: 9). The solar panels are lashed above the steering paddle at the stern, just like *Hōkūle'a*. Besides the fabric shelters and the modern sailcloth and lashing material employed, *Te Aurere*'s other "concessions to modern technology include heavy-weather gear for the crew and a Japanese paddler (outboard motor) for negotiating harbours" (Busby 1995: 3). Furthermore, *Te Aurere* had to comply with the Category One offshore regulations of the "New Zealand Yachting Federation", resulting in two life rafts and an

[216] As a general rule, a sailing vessel is not allowed to enter a harbour under sail (pers. comm. Sally Andrews).

emergency radio transmitter[217] being installed on board. Solar energy is used as a source of power for the transmitter and the HF radio[218] (Busby 1995: 3).

4.7.4.2 *Contemporary tools and materials*

Due to his former profession as a bridge-building contractor, Busby was self-sufficient in respect to the power-tools and machinery. The modern equipment available to him was all he needed for shaping the hulls. He mostly used a single machine, a chainsaw with variable attachments on it. (Busby 1998b: tape 3) Twentieth century technology enabled Busby to keep to his tight time schedule. When I asked him if he would ever have considered hand-adzing his *waka* in the event that he had had more time available, he immediately replied: "I like doing it the quickest way" (pers. comm. Busby).

> A lot of people used to say to me: 'Oh, you are cheating!' when we were working on the waka . . . 'You are cheating, they never used those tools.' But I said to them, 'Just hang on a minute. They used the best tools that they had. And if these were around, then they would have used them.' So . . . you've gotta keep up with the times.
> (Busby 1998b: tape 2)

The sails are made from modern fibre. Instead of having a deckhouse, like *Hawaiki Nui*, Busby followed *Hōkūle'a*'s example and constructed shelters above each hull. These are made of modern, water-proof fabric. The lashing ropes, tricing lines, sheet lines and halyards are also made from modern materials.

5.5 Shaping the hulls

5.5.1 A problem: Equalising the hulls

As mentioned previously, one log was smaller than the other, "[a]nd of course you've gotta start with the smaller one first" (Busby 1998b). The considerable difference between his *kauri* trees proved to be a major disadvantage.

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[217] An emergency position indicator radio beacon (E.P.I.R.B.) was donated by Pains Wessex for *Te Aurere*'s safety on her voyages (LeNoel Papers).

[218] This radio was used for daily communications with students who followed *Te Aurere*'s voyage to Rarotonga in 1992 from their classrooms (Busby 1995: 3).

Fig. 5.7. *January 1991: Transporting a kauri tree from the Herekino State Forest to Te Aurere's building site. (Photograph by Paul LeNoel)*

Fig. 5.8. *Aurere, Doubtless Bay: Arrival of a kauri tree. (Photograph by Paul LeNoel)*

Fig. 5.9. *Cutting the larger kauri log to the size of the smaller hull. (Photograph by Paul LeNoel)*

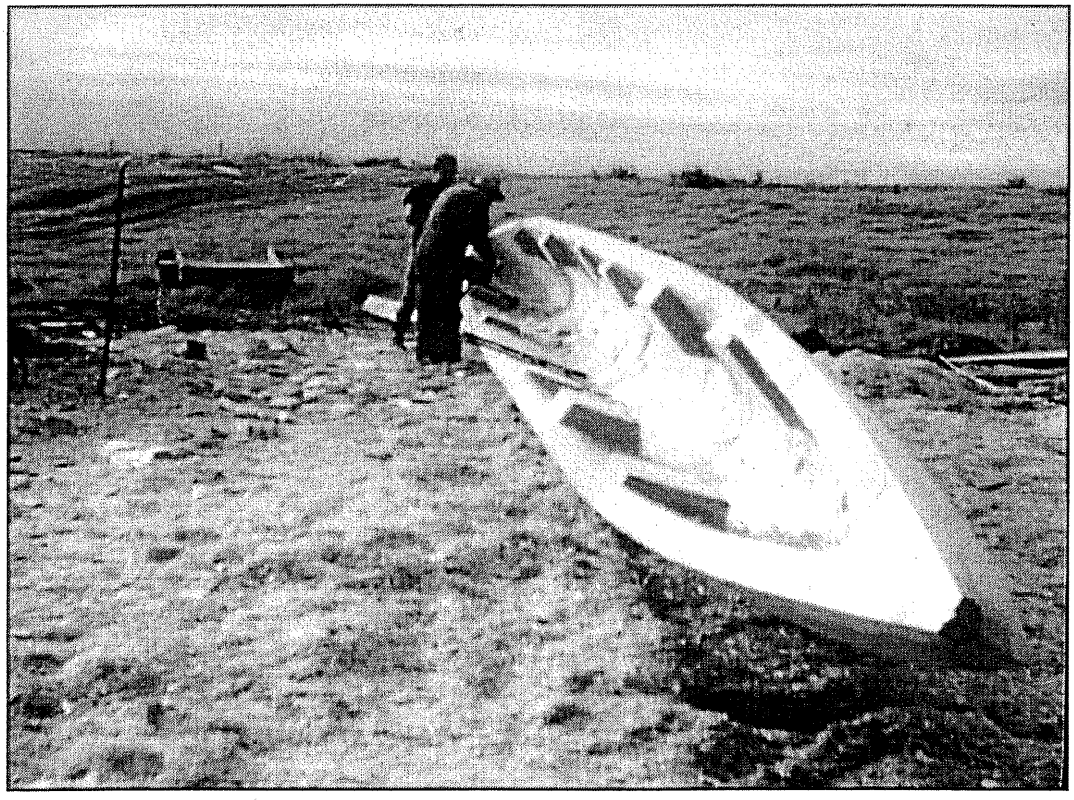

Fig. 5.10. *Hector Busby and a Māori trainee working on a hull aligned on the north-south axis. (Photograph by Paul LeNoel)*

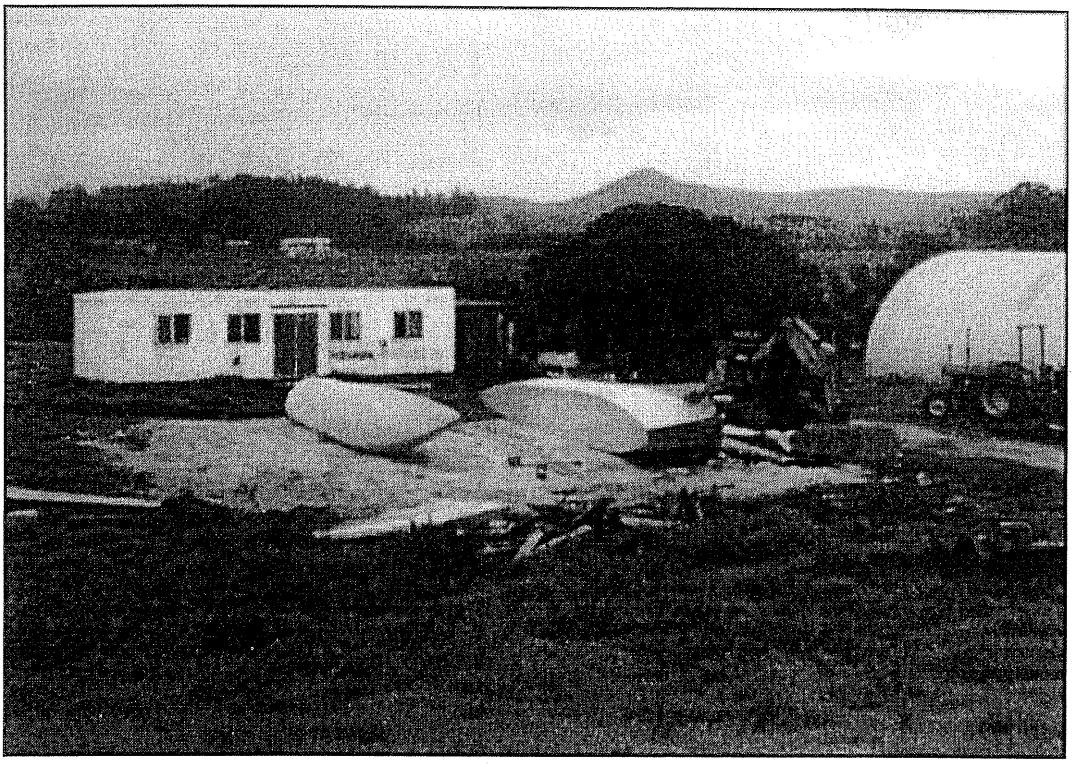

Fig. 5.11. *Constructing Te Aurere's hulls. (Photograph by Paul LeNoel)*

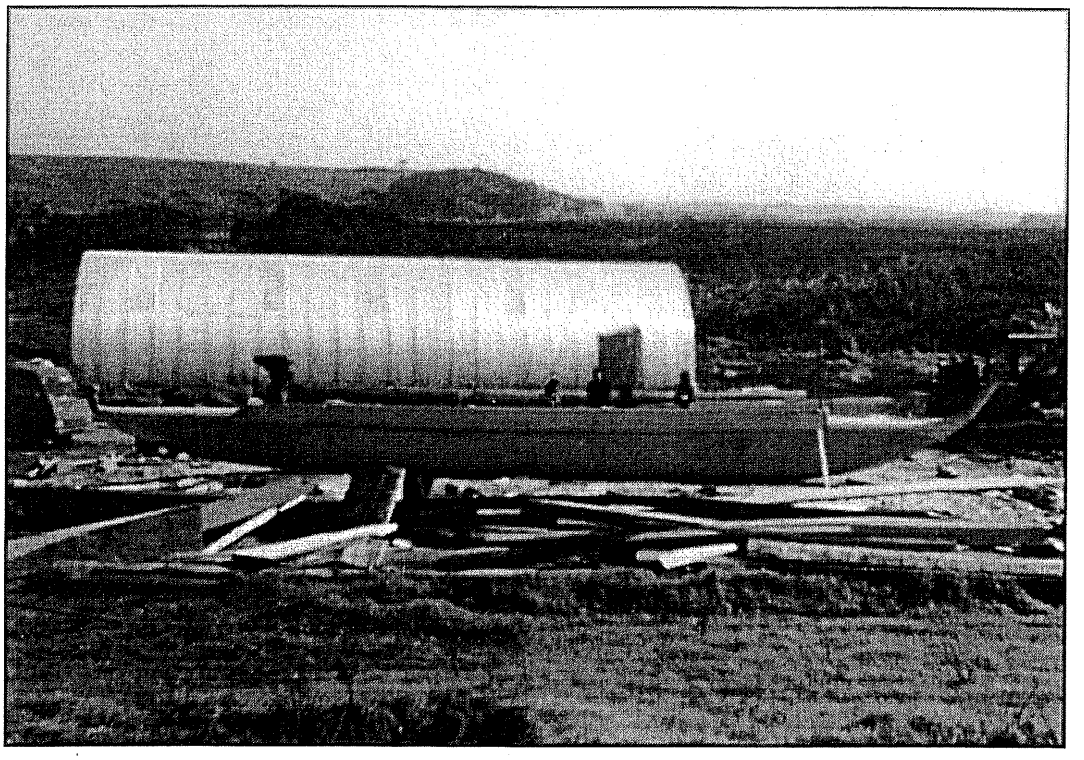

Fig. 5.12. *Constructing the upper body. (Photograph by Paul LeNoel)*

> The shape of the hull has to be according to the size of the tree. In *Te Aurere's* case, one of the trees was beautiful, and the other was tapering away too fast. It's no use having one hull different from the other so I started with the small hull, and had to waste all that timber on the big tree. (Busby 1995: 3)

5.5.2 Length of the hulls

Because Busby had to adjust his hulls based on the smaller tree (Fig. 5.9), he lost some possible length. To minimise this loss, Busby decided to add a piece onto the bottom of the smaller hull. After flattening the hull, he attached a piece of wood (about seven inches thick) onto its bottom, using glue and dowels. Now covered with protecting layers of paint, this adjustment is not noticeable to an unknowledgable observer (Busby 1998b: tape 1). Busby is convinced, that the original Māori voyaging canoes were bigger than *Te Aurere*, "roundabout 70 to 80 feet" (Busby 1998b: tape 2). *Te Aurere* is smaller, which, he believes, is an advantage when the swells are big because a smaller *waka* is "easier" in the troughs. (Busby 1998b: tape 2)

5.5.3 Shaping Techniques

When shaping the hulls, it is important to do an even job all along the canoe, inside as well as outside. To check the inside of the hulls for irregularities, Busby's Māori ancestors "used to fill the canoe with water to shape and hollow out the canoe" (Busby 1995: 2). He explains, "[i]f you have a kink in a dish and you fill it with water, when you get to that kink the water will show the kink" (Busby 1995: 2). But Busby employed another method, he made use of the sun (Fig. 5.10).

> Nowadays, we drag the heavy logs with a tractor into the open and use the sun instead. We normally have the canoe facing north and south (either the stern south or the bow south) and when the sun rises over the top edge of the canoe, you work on the western side. East side is in shade. You can actually see the lumps, and the shadow of the sun shows it clearly. You just mark and trim them down until the sun gets over to the other side. (Busby 1995: 2)

The cutting of the massive *kauri* logs took Busby about nine months in 1991, with the powerful help of "a Japanese adze", as Busby likes to refer to his Japanese-made chainsaw (Busby 1995: 2).

5.5.4 The position of the hull's beam: Creating lift

Though Busby found *Hōkūle'a*'s construction plans not very helpful, his actual experience of sailing on the Hawai'ian replica[219] was very beneficial for deciding on an important detail of his *waka* design: the position and width of the beam. Busby recalls, "I noticed that, when *Hōkūle'a* was travelling it was good, but when you had a running sea, it wouldn't lift up and watered you" (Busby 1998b: tape 1). As an experienced *waka taua* builder, he could easily identify the problem. *Hōkūle'a*'s hulls are shaped the same way towards the prow as they are towards the stern. This is very different from the way the Māori *waka taua* are built:

> They [the *waka taua*] have got a beam three quarters of the way along the hull from the stern. . . . When you've got a big swell, it [the beam] lifts the back up and it [the *waka*] wants to surf. But with *Hōkūle'a* the beam is right in the middle of the waka, not at the stern. (Busby 1998b: tape 1)

Despite knowing the general proportions needed to create the desired lift, Busby could not achieve an end result that could satisfy him. According to her builder, *Te Aurere* is still too narrow in the front. "[S]he dives a little bit. There is not enough buoyancy in the front there, when a wave comes to lift it up" (Busby 1998b: tape 3). Because one of the logs tapered, he was forced to reduce the beam. This reduction resulted in a much more narrow hull-shape, than he had originally aimed for. Busby "would have loved to let *Te Aurere* have about at least another eight inches of width at the front" (Busby 1998b: tape 3), but the logs he had chosen restricted him. Overall, Busby believes that *Te Aurere* is easier to sail than *Hōkūle'a*. Following the improvements he carried out, based on sea-trials and *Te Aurere*'s maiden voyage, he is especially proud of her comparably quick tacking. (Busby 1998b: tape 1)

5.5.5 *Pare-ngarungaru*: a Māori way of hewing timber

Another of *Te Aurere*'s traditional features is based on Busby's experience with *waka taua*. Māori traditionally used a particular way of finishing the hulls of their canoes, which can still be seen on their *waka taua* today. The Māori way is easily distinguishable from the Western way

[219] In 1985 he sailed on *Hōkūle'a* from Oahu to the Big Island in Hawai'i (pers. comm. Busby), and during *Hōkūle'a*'s "Voyage of Rediscovery", he was a crew member on the leg from Tonga to Pangopango in American Samoa from May 23, 1986 to May 25, 1986 (PVS-website: *1985.html*).

of making the finish of a hull as smooth as possible. As Elsdon Best (1976: 61) explains, "the Maori deliberately left the outsides of his canoe widely grooved with narrow intervening ridges".[220] What perhaps had the look of a rough and incomplete job to a Western eye more used to the sight of European vessels was, in actual fact, the result of many centuries of seafaring experience. According to Best's informant Hare Hongi (Best 1976: 62), this particular style of adzing the exterior of the *waka* is termed *pare-ngarungaru* in *te reo Māori* (Māori language). Its purpose, "kei piri te wai te waka", was to keep the water from "clinging to the canoe" (Best 1976: 62). Like the scallops of a fish, it creates little turbulences which break up the density of the water the vessel is passing through.[221] This type of surface, as the Māori know from experience, considerably increases the speed of the *waka*.

Using his chainsaw with an attachment, Busby scalloped the surface of his *kauri* hulls to create this particular traditional finish on *Te Aurere*. From experience, he was well aware of the effect this would have. Busby explains,

> As the canoe goes along, the scalloped hull creates air bubbles and the water doesn't stick to the hull. If you had a smooth hull, the water would drag as you moved through water. With that scalloped edge, you go faster. You can see those air bubbles if you lean over the side and look as the canoe sails along. (Busby 1995: 3)

A side-effect of these air bubbles is that they help *Te Aurere's* navigators to estimate the speed of the vessel. One simply has to pick a bubble and count the seconds it takes for this bubble to get from the *tauiho* to the *taurapa* to roughly determine how fast the vessel is going. (pers. comm. Thatcher)

5.5.6 Adding skegs

Attached to the bottom of each hull towards the stern, *Te Aurere* has what Busby refers to as a 'keel'. According to Busby, the *waka* tracked much better after he added these skegs.

> [W]hen we first launched *Te Aurere* . . . and . . . sailed to Waitangi from Doubtless Bay we found that it [the *waka*] was slipping sideways too much so what I did, I put a keel [or skeg] on it . . . . This [skeg] was about 8 feet [2.4 m] long . . . and about 11 inches [0.28 m] deep, from nothing to 11 inches there. (Busby cited in *PWMS 1996*: 160f.)

[220] Quote from a letter sent to Elsdon Best by Hare Hongi (Best 1976: 61).
[221] Best (1976: 62) has recorded three different styles of this feature of Māori *waka*, which are termed *ngao-pae, mamaku,* and *ngao-tu*. For illustrations of these styles, see Best (1976: 62).

The only disadvantage Busby sees in having them is the fact that they "fight against the steering paddle" (Busby 1998b: tape 1). Sea trials showed that *Te Aurere* was "too hard to steer" after this alteration, and Busby subsequently shortened the skegs to "six feet [1.83 m]", and "she [*Te Aurere*] was a bit better" (Busby cited in *PWMS 1996*: 161). Today, Busby suggests having keels at the front of the vessel which, he believes, would make the steering much easier (Busby 1998b: tape 1).

5.6 Constructing the upper body

5.6.1 Lashing

Mau Piailug, not only a master navigator, but also a master canoe-builder, completed the lashings on *Te Aurere*. As Gable (1995: A-10) asserts, "[a]ll joints [of the twin-hulled *waka*] are lashed using traditional methods". The platform, the hulls, and all other parts of the canoe, are lashed together in the traditional Micronesian way but using contemporary lashing materials. During this time Piailug also instructed the Māori apprentices on the project. Since then Paul LeNoel from Pukepoto, one of the Māori trainees, has upheld these Micronesian traditional lashing skills, which he acquired while working alongside the Micronesian *waka* expert.[222]

5.6.2 Sails

According to Busby (1995: 3), *Te Aurere*'s sails "are of traditional shape and rig" (cf. Andrew 1996a: 3). They are made of canvas and not from traditional materials. *Te Aurere* was originally single-masted (Fig. 5.13), but, following her first voyage, she became double-masted and "gaff rigged . . . with the traditional crab-claw shaped sail to improve sailing speed and handling characteristics" (Fig. 5.14) (Gable 1995: A-10).

The "traditional shape and rig" Busby referred to is presumably a Polynesian shape and rig. The reconstruction of a traditional Māori sail-shape and rig is a highly problematic issue, due to a paucity of data on traditional Māori sails (the only surviving Māori sail is held at the British

[222] See 5.3.1 this thesis.

Museum).[223] As several experienced sailors (such as Harmen Hielkema, Jefferson Chapple, Dr Hans-Dieter Bader, and Margaret Hicks) pointed out to me, the traditional sails and rigging appear to be one of the least successfully researched parts of contemporary voyaging canoes throughout the Pacific. Experimental voyaging canoe projects still have great difficulties with the reconstruction of a traditional rig. For example, according to *Hōkūle'a*'s original proposal (*A Proposal for an Experimental Voyage between Hawaii and Tahiti*: n. p.), she was going to have a "basic Polynesian spritsail design".[224] But in the end, the design of her

> . . . sail-rig departed from traditional precedents. The traditional Polynesian sprit sail was typically laced to two spars, one of which acted as the mast and the other as the boom. The rig Hokule'a consists of a sail attached to spar and boom plus a shorter mast on which the spar, boom and sail are raised and lowered. (PVS-website: *build.html*))

This is exactly the way *Te Aurere*'s rig works, which is unlikely to be a co-incidence, especially when considering the great degree of input from the PVS at all stages of the project.[225]

David Lewis (*PWMS 1996*: 22f.) describes the traditional Polynesian sail-shape "with the scoop out of the top" as "a very well-engineered shape, that the further away from the point of attachment of the spars the less sail they have to support". For example, Lewis remembers the difficulties they encountered with *Hōkūle'a*'s original sail shape. Before they started using "the traditional Polynesian shape with the scoop out of the top", Lewis remembers, "we kept breaking our spars" (Lewis in *PWMS 1996*: 22). But after encountering these problems, Lewis went to study the petroglyphs, the rock engravings of Hawai'ian sails, on the Big Island in Hawai'i together with *Hōkūle'a*'s Hawai'ian captain at the time. He recalls, "once we had copied the proportions of those ancient petroglyphs we didn't break any more spars" (Lewis in *PWMS 1996*: 23).

Lewis (*PWMS 1996*: 29) describes *Te Aurere*'s sails as "about as traditional as you can make it with cloth" and adds, "I think there's not too much difference in the sails they used on the

[223] From the early 19th century onwards European sails, such as the 'duck sails' used on whaling boats, were a common trading item between the early whalers and Māori. In due course, the European sails came to replace the traditional woven sails on Māori *waka*, causing the latter to become a rare sight in many areas. (Nelson 1991: 49f.)

[224] In respect to the sail design, I noticed that the PVS changed *Hōkūle'a*'s original rig for her most recent challenging voyage to Rapanui, Easter Island, in 1999. To me, as a layperson, the rig they used for this difficult voyage looks surprisingly similar to a modern Western rig (see PVS-website: *rapanui/newsails.gif*).

[225] See chapter 4.7.1 this thesis about the assistance provided by the PVS to help make *Te Aurere* a success.

Hokule'a the first time [before altering it to the petroglyph's style]. I think they modified it a bit in the subsequent history." Comparing the two based on his experiences of sailing on both vessels, Lewis (*PWMS 1996*: 29) comments,

> I think *Te Aurere* turned out best on nearly every count, but, let's face it, the *Hokule'a* was one of the first ones and a lot of mistakes were made in its design and construction. I was very very impressed sailing on *Te Aurere* and she doesn't go too bad at all.

Perhaps it is a mission for the next stage of the Pacific voyaging renaissance to rediscover details about traditional Polynesian sail designs and to explore possible rigging techniques. Unfortunately caution is recommended when making use of the artists' and draftmen's impressions from early European explorations (such as the Cook voyages) into the Pacific. In a large number of cases, the original drawings and sketches appear to be technically unreliable (pers. comm. Dr Hans-Dieter Bader, Jefferson Chapple, Margaret Hicks, Harmen Hielkema, Peter McCurdy). In short, extensive experimental research is needed here which so far has rarely been possible due to factors such as limited funding and time constraints.[226] Unfortunately over recent years not much progress has been made in this area and voyaging *waka* have often retreated to a compromise, such as using canvas for the sails.[227]

5.6.3 Shelters

Busby designed simple canvas spray dodgers with a "sort of a lean-to shape" above the hulls (Busby 1995: 6). They provide a cover for the seven sleeping compartments (utilised on long voyages) and the radio area.

Journalist Sally Andrew (Andrew 1996a: 2) noted, that "[t]he shelters make the broad centre area of the boat quite cozy". But they also present a disadvantage for the vessel's sailing performance. The wind gets easily caught in the high build-ups, and hence this structure increases the leeward drift (pers. comm. Hans-Dieter Bader, Peter McCurdy). Busby wants to change these shelters to a round shape for their next Pacific voyage, "so the wind doesn't catch

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[226] See, for instance, the case of *Hawaiki Nui* described in chapter 2.6 this thesis.

[227] As remarked in *A Proposal for an Experimental Voyage between Hawaii and Tahiti* (n.d.; my emphasis),

> Canvas *appears* to be the better material, but it is known that in some sections of Micronesia pandanus sails were preferred for racing, and were replaced by canvas only because of the labour involved in making pandanus sails.

David Lewis (*PWMS 1996*: 30) explains some Islanders' (in this case, the island of Ninigo north of New Guinea) preference for mat sails for racing (as opposed to their use of cloth sails for fishing) based on the "better aerofoil shape" of mat sails. This observation has been confirmed on several occasions by Harmen Hielkema,

that top corner" anymore (Busby 1995: 6; cf. Andrew 1996a: 2). Such an improvement would decrease the vessel's wind resistance, as well as slightly increasing the limited space inside the sleeping quarters. The crew's sleeping quarters, right underneath the shelter above the hulls, are just the width of a single bed. During the voyages, the quarters have to be shared between the two alternating shifts.

5.6.4 Storage on board

Each hull has a couple of square entrance-holes located underneath the shelters on platform level which lead into the hull's interior. Manoeuvring his or her body down, a person can climb below into the bottom of the *kauri* hulls which is utilised as the storage room of the *waka*. Items not immediately in use (except for the emergency gear and the crew members' private items), such as food provisions, water tanks and sails, are stored away inside the spacious hulls. At times this gear needs to be shifted around to match the changing sailing conditions and to improve the *waka hourua*'s performance.[228] Emergency gear, such as the two life rafts, are stored on deck. A little galley with a double gas burner is the cooking facility on board which Busby has copied from "the Hawai'ians".[229] The galley can be shifted around according to the current wind direction. Busby explains, "[i]f you've got wind coming from port side, we put it [the galley] on port side, in the lee of the little houses [the shelters]" (Busby 1995: 5).

5.7 Busby's Approach

In contrast to Whakataka-Brightwell, when Busby set out to build a voyaging *waka*, he did not restrict himself to the use of traditional Māori sources of knowledge in order to decide on his design and other relevant details.[230] Busby's approach was to access all possible avenues of

one of my sailing informants, who has spent several years researching the advantages and disadvantages of traditional sail materials, shapes and designs.

[228] The distribution of weight inside the hulls has been a considerable influence on changing the performance of the canoe (pers. comm. Stanley Conrad).

[229] The fuel they use is propane pas (LPG) (Busby 1995: 5).

[230] In Tai Tokerau, the flow of knowledge about *waka*, orally handed down from generation to generation, appears to have been disrupted a long time ago. Back in the 1930s Princess Te Puea send Piri Poutapu, her *tohunga tārai waka* (canoe hewing expert), up to Tai Tokerau, to help Ngā Puhi revive traditional Māori knowledge for the building of *waka taua* (see 4.3.1.1 this thesis). If the skill of constructing a still relatively widely represented *waka*, such as a *waka taua*, already needed outside instruction in the first half of this century, it seems highly unlikely that knowledge about a much more exceptional type of *waka*, such as the *waka hourua*, could have survived till the present.

information, which included available literature as well as expert advice from overseas. Mau Piailug's and Nainoa Thompson's expertise have been particularly vital to the project, as has been the PVS's plans of *Hōkūle'a*'s design. Busby himself, however, comments that the design of his *waka hourua* "sort of came naturally as soon as I got the logs" (Busby 1998b: tape 2). Elsewhere he states that, "I would never build a canoe out of modern materials - because you can't go through all the steps of construction and that's what its [sic] all about" (Busby 1995: 2).

On the one hand, Busby has focused on traditional customs and the use of traditional materials, and made a considerable effort to revive some ancient Māori rituals during the generation of this *waka hourua*. On the other hand, he has also made decisive concessions to modern times. Throughout all the stages of *Te Aurere*'s construction, the project relied on the use of contemporary technology.[231] Powertools, such as a chainsaw with variable attachments, saved the project some precious time. Busby's approach combines an open-minded policy of utilising the advantages of the modern day with an explicit focus on Māori traditions.

5.8 Launching, Sea Trials and Modifications

5.8.1 Launching

> There are traditional chants when you launch the canoe, too. So it's not much use having a canoe, or trying to learn about the traditions, if you're gonna leave some of the important parts out. (Busby 1995: 2)

When the time came for the launching, Busby sent out his invitations for the ceremonial blessing at *Te Aurere's* building site. In the early morning on 12 January 1992, *Te Aurere* was placed on the sand at Tokerau Beach at low tide. With the incoming tide, the *waka hourua* slowly began to lift and was eventually drawn out to the sea (Fig. 5.13). (pers. comm. Stanley Conrad)

[231] According to Busby, the only carving he did without power-tools was the completion of the *tauiho* and *taurapa*. Hand-adzing, such as Piailug's work on the hulls (Turei 1992), was the exception.

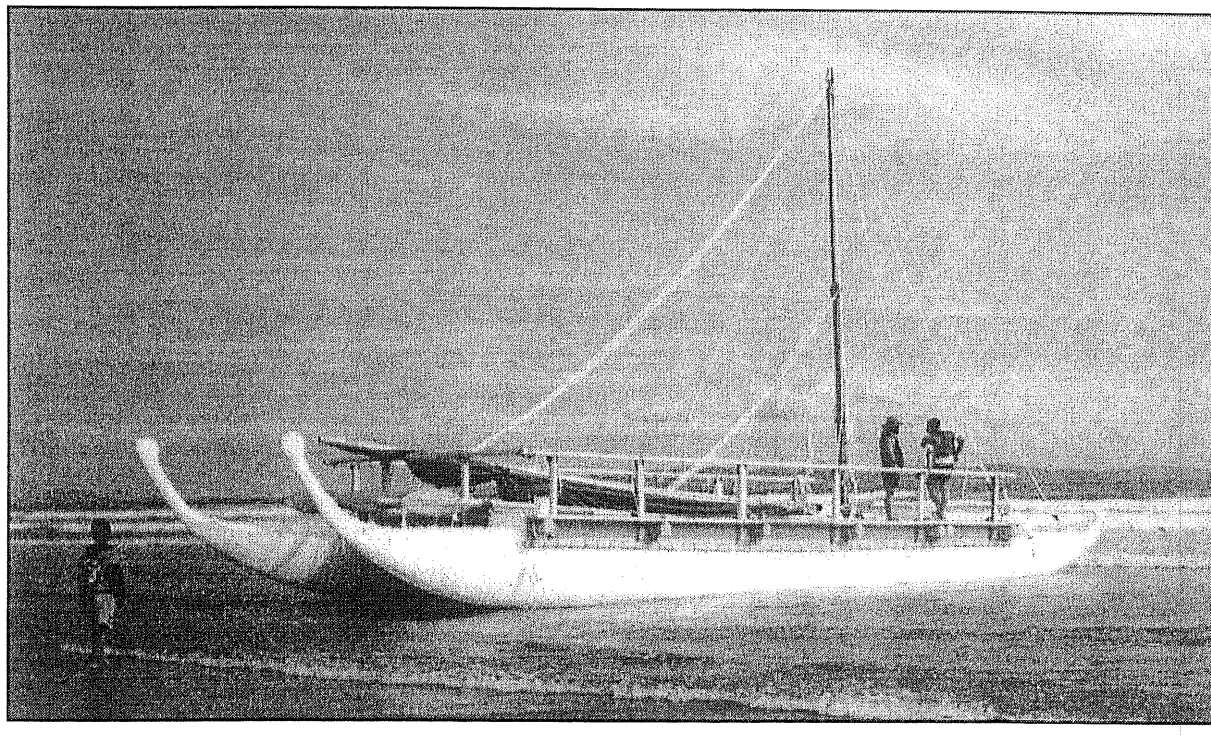

Fig. 5.13. *Tokerau Beach, Doubtless Bay, 12 January 1992: The launching of Te Aurere. (Northern Advocate, 14 January 1992)*

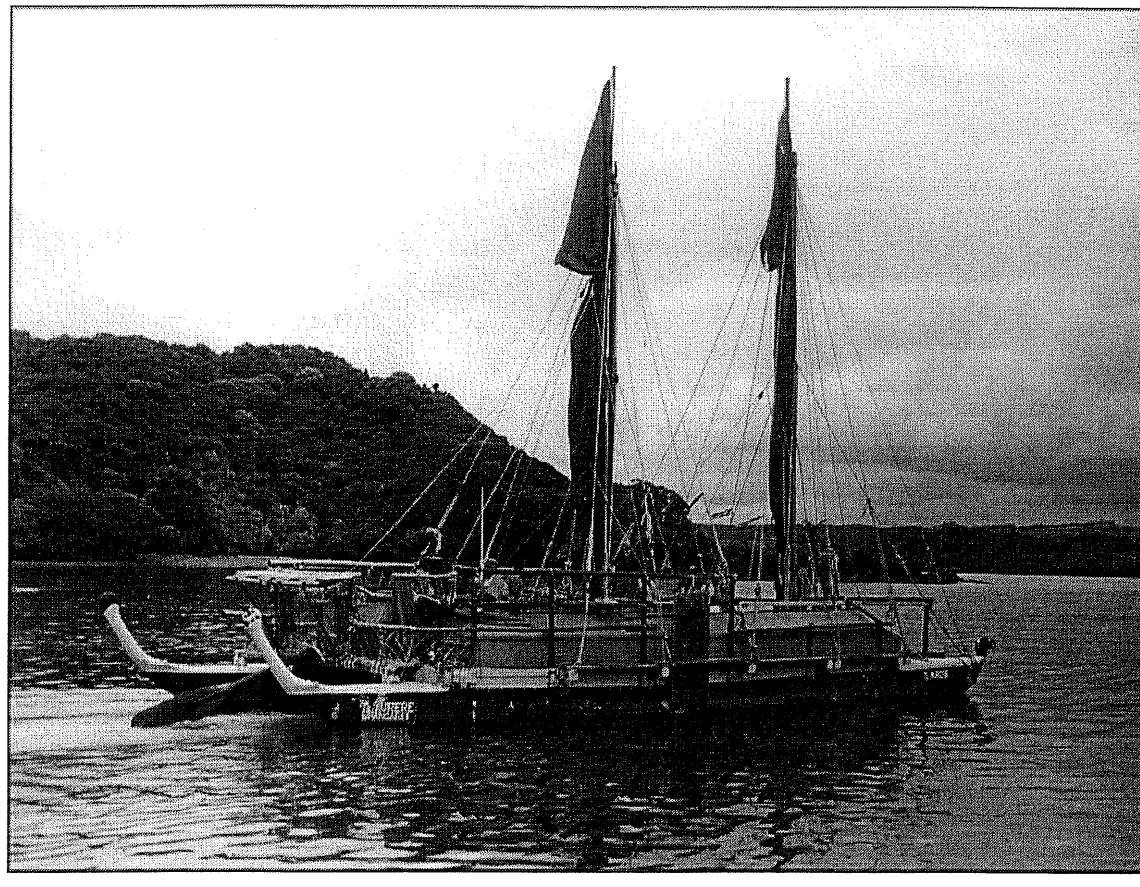

Fig. 5.14. *December 1998: Te Aurere heaved to and using her outboard motor to return to Mangonui Harbour. (Note her altered design, e.g. the addition of a second mast and leeboards.) (Photograph by author)*

The invited guests gathered out in the open, at the beach in front of the building site at Doubtless Bay, and participated in speeches and *waiata* in honour of this special occasion. This was the first time, probably in at least a century, that a *waka hourua* was launched by Ngā Puhi tribes in Northland and *kaumātua* from throughout *Tai Tokerau* were present (LeNoel Papers). A group of *kaumātua* "from the Gisborne area" gathered on board together with Busby to bless the *waka* (LeNoel Papers). When the *Te Aurere* first went out into the sea, a group of *kaumātua* sang a *waiata*.[232]

> Ancestors whose descent goes back to Hawaiki, reign down
> That I might scale the summit of Rakaumangamanga
> Till my eyes can see the river of Morunga
> The gathering place of the fleets of Ngapuhi
> The river of Morunga that lies before us
> It flows from the South to the North
> A gathering place of ancestral canoes
> For you who journeyed from Hawaiki, reign down
> I look toward the North to Taiamai, to Hokianga
> Where the mantle of Ngapuhi sovereignty rests
> From Hawaiki whence it came, reign down.
> (Turei 1992)

Later in the same day, a crew sailed *Te Aurere* to Mangonui (LeNoel Papers), where she was moored until her maiden voyage. After her launching, the work on *Te Aurere* continued. Sea trials needed to be conducted as well as a crew trained in rigging, sailing and traditional navigation methods.

5.8.2 Sea trials, modifications and performance

Conducting sea trials is especially important for a contemporary replica of a voyaging *waka*, a type of deep-sea vessel that had obviously disappeared in this part of the Pacific centuries ago. As Nainoa Thompson comments,

> Because a canoe like this has not been tested in 400 years, you need to do the initial sea-trials first, put it in the water now and test it, get the information, make determinations, take it back out of the water and make the required modifications so that you will be working towards a successful voyage . . . . (Turei 1992)

At first Busby put *Te Aurere* in and out of the water about three times, because

[232] The following words are a translation by Waihoroi Shortland (Turei 1992). The *waiata* was sung in *te reo*

> She was heavy and unbalanced. The trees for *Te Aurere* had been knocked down at two different times. It was hard to get it even but as soon as we put it in the water I could tell. The weight of the two hulls were [sic] similar, (but the distribution along the length of their keels was different.) On one hull the bow was a lot heavier and vice versa. . . . As soon as we launched it we could see one of the bows was down so I thought about the scales. It worked out. (Busby 1995: 4)

Equipped with four transport scales, Busby put one inside each prow of the hulls and one into each stern. He admits, "I cheated a bit" (Busby 1995: 4), but obviously this was the quickest way of solving the problem.

An important factor is the strength of the hulls which they tested by leaving the vessel in the surf of Doubtless Bay over several hours. The results were remarkable. Despite the waves bashing the vessel, weighing nearly 10 tonnes (LeNoel Papers), onto the beach for a considerable amount of time, the *kauri* did not suffer any harm. Further tests showed that the waka was basically unsinkable. Even after they had completely filled up both hulls with seawater, the top of the hulls was still showing above sea-level. (pers. comm. Conrad)

Once these preliminary sea-trials were over and the vessel fully launched, further sea trials under sail were undertaken. These were very important, providing information about the canoe's performance under different points of sail, different wind directions and different wind speeds, as well as determining how much load the *waka* could handle and if any modifications were needed for that purpose. One of the problems Nainoa Thompson recognized immediately was the lack of sail area. In Thompson's opinion, *Te Aurere* needed at least another 100 square feet of sail (Turei 1992). But despite Thompson's early advice in January 1992, it was not until after the first voyage to Rarotonga in October/November 1992, that Busby decided to add a second mast and sail. In a way, *Te Aurere's* first voyage was another, and a very instructive, sea trial for Busby. He remarks, that "[o]n that trip, we found the canoe was underpowered. So we were still learning then" (Busby 1995: 4). After their arrival back in Aotearoa, the second mast and sail were added, and "now she's going pretty good" (Busby 1995: 4).

Māori.

5.8.2.1 *The steering system*

Other modifications done after the first voyage included changing the steering system by reducing the number of steering paddles to a single paddle combined with leeboards. Originally *Te Aurere* had three steering paddles made from *kauri*, two short ones and one long one. Under the ongoing pressure of high seas on the trip to Rarotonga, the blades eventually broke. Busby assumes that the paddles were simply too small for their purpose (Busby 1998b: tape 1). After the *waka hourua*'s return to Aotearoa, he substituted his previous system by one large steering paddle, which, according to Busby (1998b:1) "steers quite well".

> She is hard to steer on some points of sail, but most of the time it's real easy. What happens is that as soon as you lift the paddle out of the water, she inclines to go upwind, so then you bring it back down again. We tie the paddle in one place and then you just pick it up and down. If it starts to go too high you put it down, or pull it up, or whatever. Up and down that's all you do. (Busby 1995: 5)

The idea to add leeboards stems from their first voyage to Rarotonga. The *waka* originally made great leeway and had some difficulties sailing into the wind. Brian Walden, the experienced skipper on the *Nam Sang*, suggested the use of leeboards to stop *Te Aurere*'s strong tendency to go sideways. As soon as the boards were put in, the vessel's performance improved. (pers. comm. Hicks)[233] As Busby explains,

> Leeboards can take the place of some of the paddles they [the Māori] used to have. They used to stick these paddles in on the leeward side of the canoe. Instead, I've got leeboards on the windward side of the leeward hull. (Busby 1995: 4)

Today leeboards are positioned at the centre outside of either hull. The leeboards can be adjusted in height according to the sailing conditions.

5.8.2.2 *Speed*

According to Busby, *Te Aurere*'s average speed is "about 4.5 knots" (Busby 1995: 5).[234] According to navigator Jack Thatcher, during *Te Aurere*'s 18-day voyage from Nuku Hiva to Hawai'i in 1995 (see 6.5.1 this thesis), the *waka* did "5 knots average a day, 120 miles [192 km] a day" (*PWMS 1996*: 45). Busby recalls,

[233] Margaret Hicks interviewed Brian Walden after *Te Aurere*'s voyage in 1992, but she never published her interview (pers. comm. Hicks).

> Our fastest time was across Cook Strait. We did 25 miles in 2.5 hours. 10 knots average, from the entrance at Porirua to the entrance at Tory Channel and five miles of that was in the lee of Mana Island. Winds were from the north west, and I timed the crossing half hour before high tide . . . (Busby 1995: 5)

[234] In later years, as the wood dried out over time, *Te Aurere* became lighter, and hence faster (pers. comm. Busby).

Chapter Six

Te Aurere: Voyages

We see Te Aurere in the future as weaving a korowai, or cloak, that will weave together all the peoples of the Pacific.

Pakeke Winiata[235]

1992: September	2,200 n.m. (nautical miles)[236]	Aotearoa - Rarotonga (Cook Islands)
1992: November	1,800 n.m.	Rarotonga - Aotearoa
1993: November - December	800 n.m.	West Coast, Te-Ika-a-Māui
1994: January - February	1,000 n.m.	Raukawa, East Coast
1994: December	400 n.m.	Tai Tokerau training
1995: March	400 n.m.	Society Islands
1995: April	400 n.m.	Tahiti - Nukuhiva (Marquesas)
1995: April – May	2,200 n.m.	Nukuhiva - Hawai'i
1995: June	2,700 n.m.	Hawai'i - Rarotonga
1995: November	1,800 n.m.	Rarotonga - Aotearoa
1997: January - February	200 n.m. (ca.)	Whangarei and Waitangi
1998: January - February	1,800 n.m. (ca.)	Te-Ika-a-Māui[237]

Table 6.1. *Te Aurere's voyages between 1992 and 1998.*

[235] Pakeke Winiata was a crew member on board *Te Aurere* on her maiden voyage from Aotearoa to the Cook Islands in September/October 1992 when he made this comment (see Turei 1992).

[236] In contrast, Norman (1995: 131) reports the distance of *Te Aurere*'s 1992 journey as 1800 nautical miles.

[237] Except for the last two entries the distance of which I estimated myself, the above table is adapted from *Te Whakatere Waka: He Kohikohinga Kōrero*, Whiringa-ā-rangi (November) 1996 (no page numbers). This document in *te reo Māori* was passed on to me by *Te Aurere* crew member Pat Aramoana. I have reason to believe that the document's author is Te Taka Keegan, as it contains material from his PhD-thesis (Keegan 1996) which is entitled *Te Whakatere Waka Hourua*.

6.1 Introduction

Since her first voyage between September and November 1992, *Te Aurere* has proven her seaworthiness on thousands of nautical miles of open ocean as well as on coastal voyages. Between 1992 and 1995 alone, she covered a distance of approximately 14,050 nautical miles. As Busby (1995: 9) remarks, "[w]e're out there to prove two things, that our canoe is . . . seaworthy and to learn the traditional navigation. Those are the main things as far as I'm concerned". Unlike *Hawaiki Nui*, *Te Aurere* is usually accompanied by an escort vessel on her voyages.

In this chapter my primary focus is on the cultural objectives of *Te Aurere*'s voyages, which also includes some information on the revival of non-instrumental navigation techniques.[238]

6.2 A Polynesian Mission: Reviving Pan-Pacific Links

> *E kore au e ngaro; he kākano i ruiruia mai i Rangiātea.*
> I will never be lost; the seed was sown even in Rangiātea.
> (Eriksen-Sohos 1996: 19)

One of Busby's proclaimed "main goals" since he started voyaging has been "to get the Polynesian family back together again" (Busby 1995: 6; cf. Busby 1998b: tape 2). He asserts, "[m]y intention right from the start when I built *Te Aurere* was to look for our *whanaunga* [relations] throughout the Pacific" (Busby 1998a). Throughout my field work (as well as my literature and internet-research in respect to the Polynesian Voyaging Society) I have repeatedly come across varying expressions of this particular idea of reconnecting Pacific peoples. To cite another example, *Te Aurere*'s longterm captain Stanley Conrad sees the *waka hourua* as "a needle putting threads through the Pacific"; in other words, its long distance voyaging is establishing special links between Pacific islanders (pers. comm. Conrad). For *Te Aurere*'s crew, arriving on other islands has always been a particularly impressive experience. Busby remembers that throughout the Pacific, the *mihi* (welcoming speech) to *Te Aurere* has contained the following basic message: "At last you come home! You have virtually been away for so

long, welcome home."[239] (Busby 1998a) Jack Thatcher, after navigating *Te Aurere* from Nukuhiva to Hawai'i, remembered,

> Our welcome in Hawai'i like all other welcomes were [sic] very satisfying. Whole communities opening up to us with so much Aloha [love] that it is hard to express the feelings that we [the crew] experienced with the sharing of our culture.
> (Thatcher 1995: A-19)

This idea of reestablishing a cultural bond is based on the simple historical fact that Pacific Islanders in general, and Polynesians in particular, share a common seafaring heritage.[240] Voyaging in the Pacific was undoubtedly a unique and amazing feat in the history of humankind. As James Belich (1996: 18f) remarks, "[o]cean voyaging and colonisation over staggering distances are often seen as the Polynesians' most impressive technological achievement". To fully understand the contemporary significance of this spreading awareness of a shared cultural heritage, it needs to be contextualised within the global phenomenon of ethnicity movements (see, for instance, Stavenhagen 1994; Nagel 1996); or, perhaps more to the point in respect to voyaging, to the idea of an indigenous cultural renaissance. I intend to explore the implications of the idea of cultural renaissance to the extent that it assists in highlighting the meanings of the particular project at stake in this chapter, *Te Aurere*.

Throughout the Pacific a growing cultural assertiveness amongst indigenous Islanders has resulted in a kaleidoscope of ethnic movements over recent decades. The ideas generated by these movements have become manifest in the cultural as well as political spheres of so-called post-colonial societies.[241] On the one hand, these movements encouraged the revival of cultural

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[238] A detailed presentation of this aspect of *Te Aurere*'s voyages would be fascinating, but, unfortunately, such a study is beyond the scope of this thesis. See Keegan (1996) for detailed information on the non-instrumental navigation techniques used on *Te Aurere*'s pan-Pacific voyage in 1995.

[239] Busby believes it is not a coincidence in his life that he built and sailed a voyaging *waka* across the Pacific. His full Māori name, given to him at birth by his *kuia* Te Whenua (pers. comm. Busby), is Hekenukumai Ngaiwi Puhipi Busby; *nuku mai nga iwi* meaning "to move people closer together" (Busby 1996). Haare Williams (1996) commented, that

> Hekenukumai Ngaiwi Busby's life has been shaped by the waka experience as though preordained in his name. He has made an outstanding contribution to the revival of tikanga waka which takes his people into the heart of classical and traditional knowledge of waka.

[240] This becomes particularly obvious when I am dealing with *Te Aurere*'s connection to Hawai'i, as well as her voyages across the Pacific (see, e.g., 4.2.3 and 6.5.2 this thesis).

[241] E.g., for New Zealand see Smith (1999) and Webster (1998); for Hawai'i see Kanahele (1986). For example, Smith (1999: 165) contextualised indigenous events in Aotearoa New Zealand from a worldwide angle as follows:

> By the 1960s fundamental questions about knowledge and power were being articulated not just through academic discourse but through social movements such as the civil rights movement, the Anti-

traditions in their many forms. On the other hand, they explicitly distinguished the cultural heritage of Pacific Islanders as "in many ways antithetical to that of the industrial, erstwhile colonial nations" (Linnekin 1997: 6). This in turn has enhanced an awareness of common cultural and historic bonds between Pacific Islanders. Defining "ethnic groups", Max Weber (1968: 389) has said, that

> The belief in group affinity, regardless of whether it has any objective foundation, can have important consequences especially for the formation of a political community. We shall call 'ethnic groups' those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation . . .

Seen from within the socio-political Pacific context of cultural renaissance, it does not appear co-incidental that the twin-hulled voyaging canoes have so successfully reappeared as a symbol of the shared seafaring heritage of Polynesians. Rather I want to propose that the increasing contemporary sense of a shared ethnic identity amongst Pacific Islanders acts as one of *the* central cultural motivational forces behind the phenomenal success of the present day Polynesian voyaging revival. For example, the mission of *Te Aurere*'s voyages across the Pacific has been to reestablish relationships within their Polynesian family, and to rediscover and renew the ancient relationships of their Māori ancestors (pers. comm. Busby; pers. comm. Aramoana). Consequently, as Busby observes, "[t]hose fellows in those islands, they know more about *Te Aurere* than our own people here" (Busby 1998b: tape 2).

Revisiting their ancient seafaring connections also means recognising common cultural traits amongst each other (such as the similarity of languages and cultural customs), and perhaps to share a vision for a better future. As Weber (1968: 392) observed,

> The belief in common descent, in combination with a similarity of customs, is likely to promote the spread of the activities of one part of an ethnic group among the rest, since the awareness of ethnic identity furthers imitation.

Vietnam War movement, the second wave of feminism and widespread student unrest culminating for many observers in the student riots in Paris in 1968. In the 1960s and 1970s other social events also took place for indigenous peoples. Protests over the Treaty of Waitangi, Bastion Point, land marches, tent embassies, sit-ins and petitions were the key events for Maori. These events were reflected in other parts of the indigenous world.

According to Belich (1996: 17), "Polynesians were homogenous Pacific Islanders more influenced by the wide and isolating ocean" and their "isolation, rapid adaptation and descent from a small original group" acted as homogenising factors. Nevertheless, under contemporary circumstances the descendants of the late Polynesian explorers have become a much more culturally diverse peoples, living in a variety of places and socio-economic realities. As Linnekin (1997: 31) remarked, "[m]aterial disparities between families and classes continue to intensify, however, and with mass communications the global rise of micro-nationalism affects political aspirations in the Islands". In this context it is interesting to note the positive effects the reemerging double-hulled voyaging canoes have in the Pacific as a whole. They have reappeared as a particularly potent symbol, physically representing a shared cultural heritage. Hence, in a sense, contemporary voyaging canoes have become cultural tools which, to the many indigenous Islanders involved, have the potential to reunite the Polynesian peoples. For instance, in 1995 six Polynesian voyaging canoe replicas, including *Te Aurere*,

> . . . came together in Tahiti to participate in a voyage from Nukuhiva in the Marquesas Island group to the Hawai'ian islands[242] to celebrate what the Hawai'ians termed 'Na Ohana Holo Moana' which loosely translated means 'Bringing the Ocean Families together as one'. (Thatcher 1995: A-15)

As indigenous peoples, Pacific Islanders also share a more recent history as a colonised, and thus decimated, peoples who have in many ways been dispossessed as well as culturally, economically and politically dominated. Thus today, one of their strongest common concerns is for the health and survival of their cultures (pers. comm. Nainoa Thompson). As Prys Morgan (1993: 43) remarked, "[d]ecay and revival are curiously intermixed, because very often those who bewailed the decay were the very ones who brought about the revival".

Like their seafaring ancestors in the past, the contemporary indigenous voyagers establish a bond between distant Pacific islands. The main motivation of these contemporary voyagers (besides fulfilling experimental objectives; e.g., Finney 1996) is of a cultural nature. As an increasing number of voyaging *waka* (such as *Hōkūle'a* from Hawai'i, *Te Au o Tonga* and *Takitumu* from the Cook Islands, and *Te Aurere* from Aotearoa, to name a few) successfully retrace the routes of their ancestors, the participants from various Pacific origin points realise the

[242] See 5.5 this thesis for details of the voyage.

significance of their cultural heritage. As crew member Pakeke Winiata (in Turei 1992) remarked,

> For ourselves as Māori people I think that this particular exercise of sailing, or voyaging, using traditional navigation techniques . . . just helps to lend more credibility to our own *tikanga*, to our own culture. And there are a lot of people out there who are doubters, disbelievers and are puzzled about things Māori. And something like this just helps, I believe, to strengthen the acceptance and the appreciation of our own *tikanga*.

For Pacific Islanders these contemporary voyaging *waka* have become a culturally as well as socio-politically significant tool. To participate in *waka* voyaging can enhance cultural awareness and pride. The *waka* facilitate a much sought after pan-Pacific cultural exchange, and, moreover, *waka* voyaging helps to establish strong pan-Pacific bonds between the communities involved.

6.3 1992: Voyage to Rarotonga

6.3.1 Background: The Sixth Festival of Pacific Arts

For the Sixth Festival of Pacific Arts[243] in Rarotonga (Cook Islands) in 1992, the organising committee decided to focus on the common seafaring heritage of the Pacific Nations and announced the Festival's theme as "Seafaring Pacific Islanders". As Jon Jonassen (1994: 308f.) commented,

> That captured the imagination of many Pacific Islanders. It was a statement of cultural pride and a reminder of the wealth of knowledge which Pacific Islanders had about their marine environment. It was a political statement which prodded the skeptics who in the past have had some difficulties in accepting the fact that Pacific Islanders not only sailed from island to island, but that for the most part, they knew where they were going. The vaka[244] represented a movement of culture from point A to point B and even a shift or integration of the political power base at various stages of each tribe's history. It was a

[243] The initiative for the Festival of Pacific Arts, today the largest cultural event of the Pacific Islands, originally grew out of concern for the survival of traditional Pacific cultures. In 1992, the then Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Sir Geoffrey Henry, outlined its background as follows.

> At that time [1972], the then leaders of the Pacific decided something had to be done for the survival of their culture. They sensed an erosion taking place; Western philosophy began to have an impact. Something had to be done. (quoted in Hatcher 1992b: 42)

Subsequently the first Festival of Pacific Arts was held in Fiji in 1972. Since then the festival has taken place in a different island group in the Pacific every four years.

[244] Cook Islands' spelling.

> characteristic of the Pacific Islands region which distinguished it, in degree, from every other region of the world.

Aotearoa was one of over twenty-seven Pacific island nations[245] which received an invitation from the festival organising committee, and, "for the first time, participating countries have been challenged to build *vaka* and sail them to Rarotonga, navigating by the stars" (Hatcher 1992b: 42). In Aotearoa, *Te Waka Toi* (the autonomous Māori board of *Creative New Zealand*) immediately approached the national federation of waka, *Nga Waka Inc.*,[246] about participating. Subsequently the *waka taua*, *Te Ika a Māui*, and the *waka hourua*, *Te Aurere*, were constructed to represent Māori from Aotearoa at the Festival. *Te Ika a Māui* was shipped over to Rarotonga while *Te Aurere* was to attempt the crossing under her own sailpower.

The Canoe Committee for the festival received positive responses for *waka* "from the Marshall Islands, Tahiti, New Zealand and Hawai'i" (McCarthy 1992a: 75).[247] Fifteen traditionally navigated *waka* arrived in the Cook Islands for this spectacular gathering intended to celebrate the revival of their traditional Polynesian heritage. An initial gathering took place at Aitutaki about four days before the official beginning of the festival. Subsequently, the pan-Pacific *waka* which had arrived in time for the festival set sail to cross the last 140 nautical miles to Rarotonga and to enter together into the historic Ngatangiia Harbour. (LeNoel Papers)

6.3.2 *Te Aurere*'s maiden voyage

When Nainoa Thompson prepared *Te Aurere's* crew for their first voyage, he showed some foresight when he told them to "[f]orget the idea that sailing is fun, it's not; not in what you guys are going to be doing" (Turei 1992). Originally Busby had hoped to leave for Rarotonga in April 1992. But time-consuming tests of the newly constructed vessel in the water, as well as some unpostponable modifications, made this goal impossible.[248] According to Busby (1995: 4), Mau Piailug (who was staying with Busby at the time) suggested trying to go over to Rarotonga in September instead.

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[245] The participating countries for the 1992 Festival of Pacific Arts were: American Samoa, Western Samoa, Easter Island, Federated States of Micronesia, Australia, Guam, Hawai'i, Kiribati, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Norfolk island, Northern Mariana Island, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Island, Tahiti, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna. (Hatcher 1992a: 40)

[246] For details on *Nga Waka* see chapter 4.4.1 this thesis.

[247] This included a *waka ama*, *Te Rauroa o Hiva*, which was paddled 1000 km from Tahiti to Rarotonga (*PWMS 1996*: 156).

[248] See chapter 4.8.2 this thesis.

The eleven crew members selected for this voyage were: the navigator, Mau Piailug, of Satawal (Carolines, Micronesia); the captain, Clayton Bertleman of Hawai'i; the captain, Stanley Conrad, of Te Kao; Max Tarawamai (Mau's protégé), of the Caroline Islands; Philip Evans, of Kaitaia; Jack Thatcher, of Tauranga; Pakeke Winiata, of Wellington; Sam Hauwaho, of Wellington; Te Aturangi Clamp, of Gisborne; Craig Subritzky, of Te Kao; and Paul LeNoel, of Pukepoto. Besides Piailug, Bertleman, Conrad and Tarawamai, none of the crew members had previous voyaging experience. Provisions on board were mainly 20th century food supplies (mostly preserved in tins), and 450 litres of water. They calculated two litres per person per day. (LeNoel Papers) The crew utilised modern sailing equipment, such as wet weather gear.

After an emotional farewell ceremony at the end of September 1992, *Te Aurere* sailed out of Taipa Beach. *Waiata* and *karakia* had been held on the shore and tears flowed freely amongst all participants. With a final *haka* on board the *waka*, her *tauiho* and *taurapa* adorned with plant garlands, *Te Aurere* left for her first Pacific voyage. (Turei 1992) Shortly after their departure, the support vessel accompanying *Te Aurere, Nam Sang*, a 30 metre yacht[249] skippered by Brian Walden of Auckland (LeNoel Papers), had serious problems with her engine. They had to turn around for repairs and both vessels arrived back that same night. A new gearbox was quickly acquired and installed, which enabled the vessels to leave again the next day. The *Nam Sang* towed *Te Aurere* to the point where they had previously turned around. (pers. comm. Busby)

On her way again, *Te Aurere* soon encountered some heavy storms. Busby recalls,

> We were supposed to go due east for about 800 miles,[250] but Mau [Piailug] was feeling very very cold. He wanted to make a beeline to Raro, and warmth. Who are we to argue against him? Unfortunately we were caught in some storms, and it was seven days before we got rid of them. (Busby 1995: 4)

Master navigator Mau Piailug guided the *waka hourua* utilising traditional navigation methods only. As Pialug remarked to film-director Peter Turei,

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[249] According to the *New Zealand Herald* (15 September 1992), the *Nam Sang* is only 20 metres long (LeNoel Papers).

[250] The plan was to sail due east until they were able to pick up the trade winds that would lift them north into the warmer regions (LeNoel Papers).

> My grandfather told me that centuries ago my people also sailed from this part of the Pacific. The navigator's knowledge I have is the same that was used by your [Māori] ancestors. (Turei 1992).

Apart from non-instrumental navigation, *Te Aurere*'s crew had no extraordinary guidelines to follow on this first trip. Though radio-contact was kept to the support-vessel *Nam Sang*, no information regarding their position was to be exchanged. The *Nam Sang*, with Busby on board, kept track of *Te Aurere*'s position at all times, as well as staying in touch with Kerikeri Radio (Bay of Islands) who passed on the latest satellite forecasts of the weather.

The main reason for the hardships and difficulties of the maiden voyage to Rarotonga was the fact that it simply was not the right time of the year to set sail there. Busby was well aware that, the prevailing winds being Northeasterlies, the conditions would be far from ideal. But he had worked out a sailing strategy and simply hoped to be fortunate with wind and weather to arrive in time for the Sixth Festival of Pacific Arts Rarotonga, beginning on 16 October 1992. He remarks, "[o]ur ancestors did not have to keep to a schedule but unfortunately we had to" (Busby 1998b: tape 3).

Te Aurere and the support vessel *Nam Sang* got caught in a heavy storm. Micronesian master-navigator Mau Piailug predicted the storm correctly and in time to avoid it, but Busby on the support vessel had contrasting information from the official weather forecasts, indicating a storm in the direction where Piailug was heading for. Worried about the safety of the *waka* and the crew, Busby decided to call off the non-instrumental navigation and ordered the waka to change its direction. Following the new course, both vessels headed straight into the storm exactly as Piailug predicted.[251] (Turei 1992)

The crew on the *waka* spent numerous days and nights continuously soaked in their wet-weather-gear (pers. comm. Conrad). But the single-hull support vessel had more problems weathering the storms than *Te Aurere* did as a double-hull (pers. comm. Conrad, Thatcher, Busby). To prevent the two vessels from separating during the storm, they soon decided to attach a towline to each other.

[251] This incident is an example of how the prediction of a skilled and experienced traditional navigator can be more accurate than a prediction based on information provided by the most advanced technological devices the western world has to offer.

Towards the end of the journey the *Nam Sang* had to take *Te Aurere* under tow, due to her broken steering paddles. Repairs on board would have been possible, but time-consuming. Due to the storms, *Te Aurere* had fallen behind schedule. By having the slightly damaged vessel towed, they could still ensure they reached the festival in time (LeNoel Papers). Finally, after 25 trying days at sea, the waka reached its first overseas destination, Rarotonga.

6.3.2.1 *Return from Rarotonga*

After the festivities in the Cook Islands, the *waka* was missing two of its experienced crew members: Master navigator, Mau Piailug, and Hawai'ian Clay Bertelmann, one of *Hōkūle'a*'s experienced sailors, did not join the return voyage to Aotearoa. Compared to the leg to Rarotonga, the return was "Champagne-sailing" (pers. comm. Thatcher). The only complications they experienced was the breaking of the mast towards the very end of the voyage. Due to the missing sail, stormy weather and a headwind, the *waka* had to be towed for the remainder of the voyage. The fishing vessel *Redeemer* assisted for the last 140 miles, because the *Nam Sang* had engine trouble. *Te Aurere* arrived back safely and made landfall in Aotearoa on 26 November 1992. (LeNoel Papers)

Despite all these difficulties, "the very rough weather conditions and some controversy" (Gable 1995: A-11), the first voyage can be seen as a success: the *waka* and the crew handled the challenges well and, though experiencing some problems with the original design, the vessel proved to be seaworthy. As Robert Gable (Gable 1995: A-11) from the *Te Tai Tokerau Tarai Waka Kōmiti* asserted, "the safety of the crew and waka were never in doubt". Due to the experience gained on this major sea-trial *Te Aurere*'s steering system was altered (adding leeboards and reducing the number of steering paddles) and a second mast was added to increase the sail area. They also learned a greater respect for the knowledge of traditional navigators.

6.3.2.2 *Education*

Prior to *Te Aurere*'s departure to Rarotonga, educational packages were distributed to schools in New Zealand.[252] School children became aware of *Te Aurere's* first voyage and could plot

[252] Busby was unable to show me an actual example of this particular educational package.

her course during the voyage. Following the Hawai'ian example, the school children also had the chance to contact the canoe via HF radio. (pers. comm. Busby) Busby recalls,

> We had 100 packages for the schools, but I don't know how many went out. It was real good to (talk with the kids). The only disappointing part was that we didn't get the direct link with Sydney. Oh gosh the kids were great, some of the questions they were asking. (Busby 1995: 11)

In 1995, Te Tari Māori O Te Whare Wānanga O Waikato, the Māori Department of the University of Waikato, prepared *The 1995 Rarotonga ki Aotearoa Rerenga a Te Aurere Education Packet* for *Te Aurere*'s then upcoming return to Aotearoa from her 1995 pan-Pacific voyage. According to education co-ordinator Te Taka Keegan (in *TAEP 1995*: v) the idea for this package was inspired from two sources:

> Firstly from being shown the level of awareness that Hawai'ian children had achieved and then secondly from seeing first hand, the intense interest and far reaching benefits that this type of program generated in Cook Island children. It was resolved that an avenue must be instigated where by the same type of benefits could be available for children living in Aotearoa.

As "a resource for future lesson plans, for future generations of children and for the future voyages of Te Aurere" (*TAEP 1995*: vi), the package was structured into five modules, some of which were written in *te reo Māori* with an English translation. The first module (*TAEP 1995*: A-1 to A-20), entitled *Te Aurere*, provided background information on this *waka hourua* and a brief summary of some of the *waka*'s voyages, which included a contribution written by Jack Thatcher, one of *Te Aurere*'s navigators, about the pan-Pacific voyages undertaken in 1995.[253] The following module (*TAEP 1995*: B-1 to B-24), entitled *Te Mahere Ara*, was "the plotting module" and provided information on *Te Aurere*'s leg from Rarotonga to Aotearoa, including "some radio broadcast information, some plotting instructions and some maps of the Pacific Ocean" (*TAEP 1995*: vi). In the third module (*TAEP 1995*: C-1 to C-16), entitled *He Kōrero Waka*, Hoturoa Barclay-Kerr offered a version of five well known traditional Māori *waka* migration stories. *Te Whakatere Waka*, the fourth module (*TAEP 1995*: D-1 to D-22), dealt with traditional wayfinding techniques. This was followed by the last module (*TAEP 1995*: E-1

[253] See chapter 5.5 this thesis.

to E-26), *Ngā Akoranga*, which reproduced "classroom activities which were used in a 1992 and a 1995 Hawai'ian Education package" (*TAEP 1995*: vi).[254]

6.4 1993/94: Circumnavigation of Te-Ika-a-Māui

During the last months of 1993 and the first months of 1994, *Te Aurere* circumnavigated *Te-Ika-a-Māui*, the North Island of New Zealand (Fig. 6.1). This voyage was a mostly unassisted 1,800 nautical miles coastal journey around the North Island of New Zealand, which lasted from November 1993 until February 1994. *Te Aurere* had several stopovers, as she visited 17 coastal *marae* along the way "where the crew conducted seminars and workshops on seamanship and traditional navigation" (Gable 1995: A-11). This voyage was set up as an opportunity for Māori from various North Island regions to learn about and experience the sailing of a *waka hourua*.[255] Navigator Jack Thatcher called this trip a "recruitment journey" (pers. comm. Thatcher), with the particular aim of awakening interest for this voyaging canoe project amongst young Māori countrywide. 'Jacko', as navigator Jack Thatcher is known on the project, remembered that people were drawn to the *waka* wherever it arrived. The so-called "children on the block" came and the crew's enthiusiasm caught on with the kids (pers. comm. Thatcher). At each stop-over an "opportunity was provided for local participation in crew activities[,] culminating in the selection of some participants to sail to the next port of call" (Gable 1995: A-11). This usually resulted in the exchange of six crew members on board for six inexperienced locals (pers. comm. Busby). Busby (1998b: tape 2)remembers that they called in at twelve different marae around the coast, as well as at Waitangi, to promote *waka hourua*. The places where they stopped over during the circumnavigation were: Hokianga, Manukau, Kawhia, Waitara (New Plymouth), Kapiti Island (the same place we anchored in 1997), Porirua,[256] Picton, Wellington, Gisborne, Whangaparaoa, Ohiwa, Whakatane, Auckland, Bream Bay (not far down from Cape Brett), and Waitangi. They completed the circumnavigation one day before Waitangi Day in 1994 (Busby 1998b: tape 2).

[254] Unfortunately an educational program could not be maintained over the succeeding few years. Despite Busby's plan to set up sail training for Māori school kids (similar to the *Spirit of Adventure*), no progress could be made in this area, mainly due to the lack of funding. (pers. comm. Busby)

[255] Busby recalls some memorable reactions from some of the newcomers. For example, a young Māori participant from Wellington, after having been given the opportunity to spend time on board during one of the legs, hitched all the way up to Northland to be greet the *waka* and her crew at Waitangi. (Busby 1998b: tape 2)

[256] The *waka* was left here over the Christmas holidays in 1993 (Busby 1998b: tape 2).

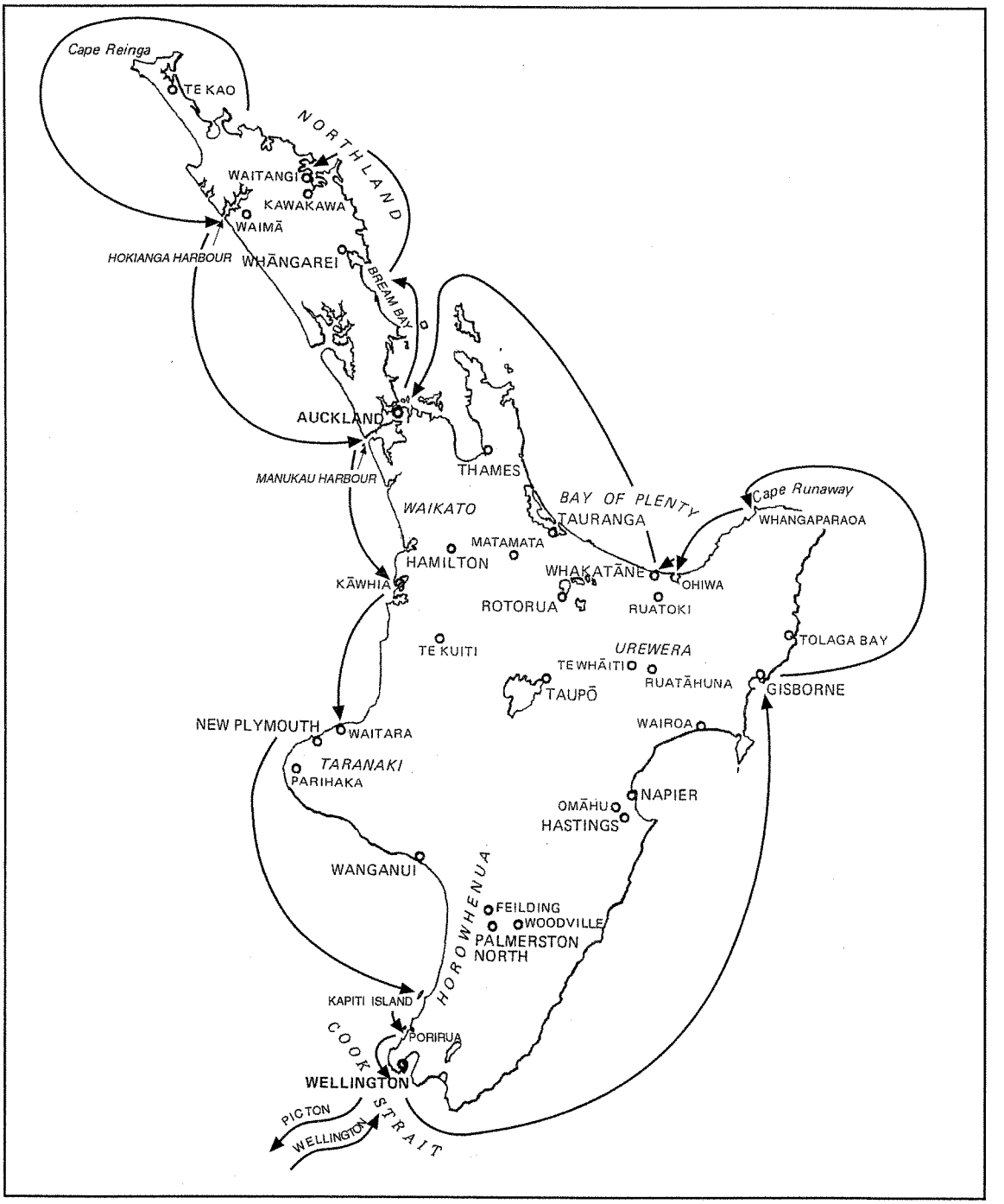

Fig. 6.1. *1993/1994: Te Aurere's circumnavigation of Te-Ika-a-Māui. (Map adapted from Salmond 1976: xii)*

For a vessel such as *Te Aurere*, coastal voyaging is understood to be much more difficult and dangerous than long-distance open ocean voyaging. David Lewis asserted,

> . . . that the traditional double canoe that tacks like a western sail boat is a clumsy vessel; it's a long distance vessel and, as everyone told Cook and people like that in Tahiti and Tonga, they're not suitable for coastal work and they're not manouverable. And that makes it all the more remarkable that *Te Aurere* did circumnavigate the North Island. That was, to my mind, a very difficult achievement, she's been sailing recently out of Tauranga and of course out of here [the National Maritime Museum at Hobson Wharf in Auckland], and for a vessel of that type I think it's a much bigger test at seamanship than a long distance voyage for which such a canoe is eminently suited and designed. (Lewis in *PWMS 1996*: 29)

6.5 1995: *Te Aurere*'s Pan-Pacific Voyages

1995 marked *Te Aurere's* longest trip so far. The *waka hourua* covered a distance of "about 7000 miles" across the Pacific (Busby 1995: 8) and "visited many Polynesian communities on more than twelve islands, Tahiti, Huahine, Raiatea, Hawai'i, to name a few" (Fig. 6.3) (Thatcher 1995: A-15). After the Waitangi Day Commemorations in 1995[257] *Te Aurere* was shipped from Northland to Tahiti. Here the Māori *waka hourua* came together with other Polynesian voyaging canoes participating in an historic voyage. Navigator Jack Thatcher (Fig. 6.2) remembered, that

> Almost all of Polynesia was represented . . . . Hawai'i with three voyaging waka, the Cook Islands with two voyaging Vaka, Aotearoa with Te Aurere, and communities from the Society Islands, Marquesas, and Rapanui. (Thatcher 1995: A-15) [258]

[257] On Waitangi Day, *Te Aurere* was to carry the Governor General at the time, Dame Catherine Tizard, from HMNZS Waikato to the Waitangi jetty (LeNoel Papers). According to Robert Gable (Gable 1995: A-11) from the *Te Tai Tokerau Tarai Waka Kōmiti* and other crew members (pers. comm. Paul LeNoel), *Te Aurere* also carried the Prince of Wales.

[258] The two Tahitian *waka* constructed for this special *hui*, *Tahiti Nui* as well as *A'a Kahikinui*, were unable to participate in the subsequent voyage. (*Tahiti Nui* was the vessel constructed from *Hawaiki Nui*'s hulls; see 2.8.3 this thesis.)

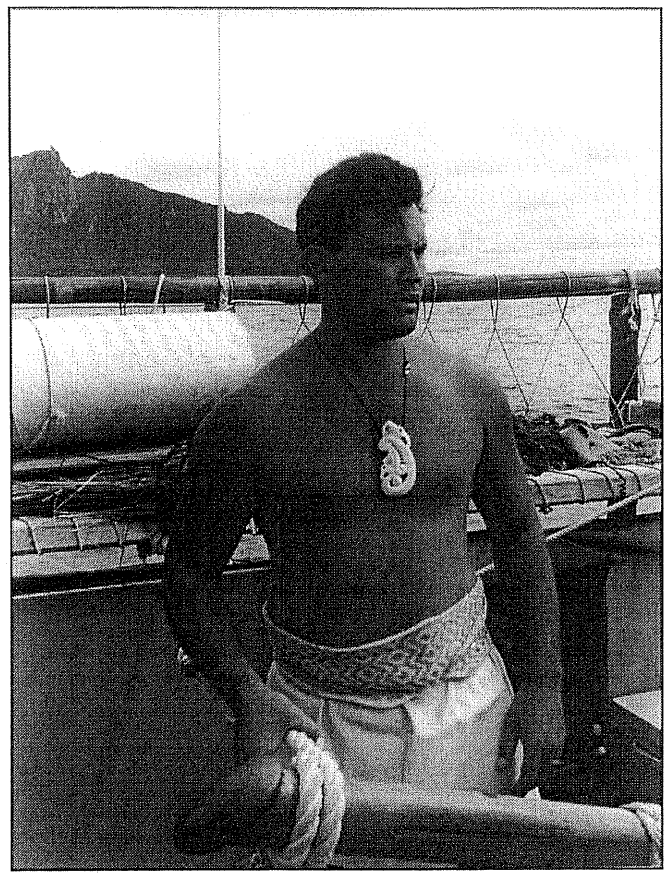

Fig. 6.2. *Navigator Jack Thatcher adjusting Te Aurere's course. (Photograph by author)*

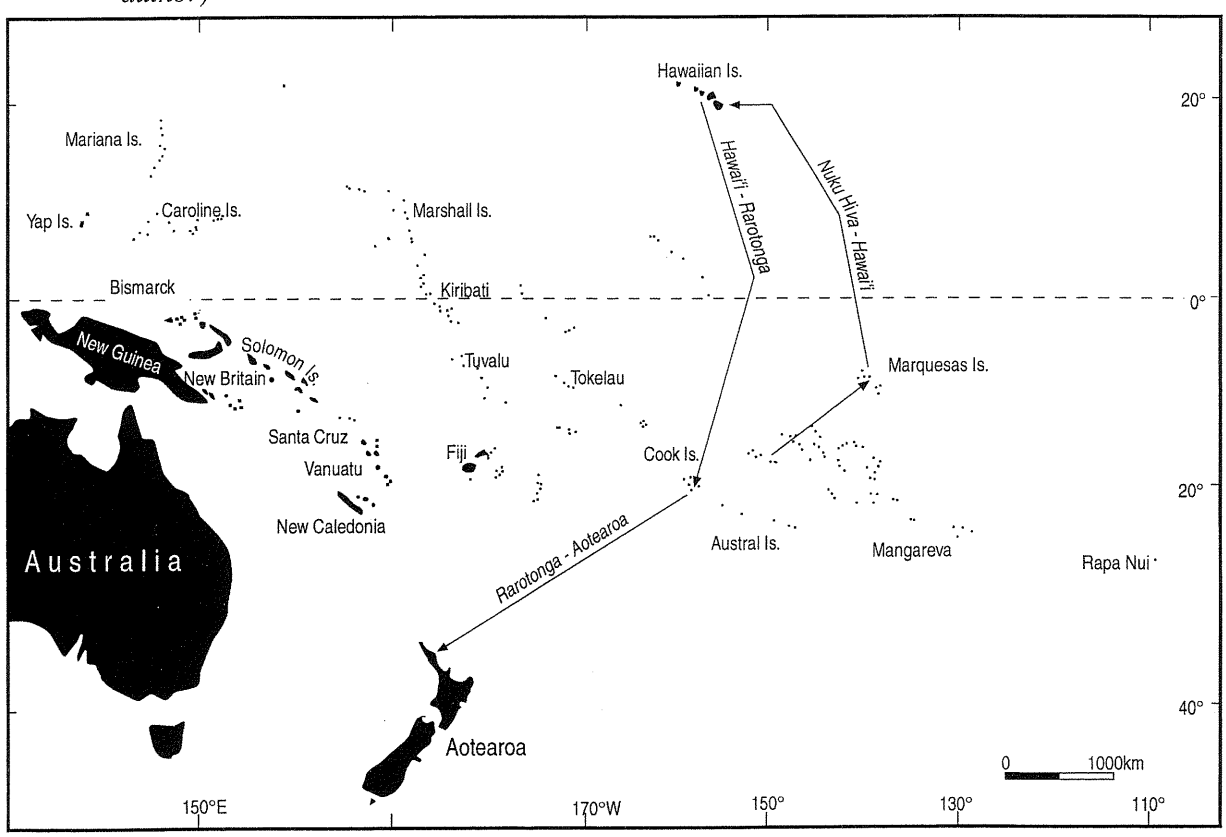

Fig. 6.3. *1995: Te Aurere's pan-Pacific voyage.*

In the following passage, Ben Finney (1999: 1) has beautifully captured this significant, as well as picturesque, moment in the modern history of Polynesian voyaging.

> During the quiet hours before dawn, twin-hulled voyaging canoes from all around Polynesia began to gather off the coral reef fringing the southwestern end of Ra 'iātea, a high volcanic island a day and a half's sail from Tahiti. *Hawai'iloa* and *Hōkūle'a* had just crossed the equator, sailing all the way from Hawai'i, the northernmost outpost of the dispersed Polynesian nation. The elaborately carved *Tahiti Nui*, the largest canoe of the fleet, had made its way from neighboring Tahiti. The smallest, lively *Takitumu*, had come from Rarotonga, a week's sail away to the southwest. The aptly named *Te Aurere* (the Flying Spray) represented Aotearoa, that massive land located still farther to the southwest beyond the warm seas and trade winds of the tropics. Two more voyaging canoes - *Makali'i* from Hawai'i and *Te Au o Tonga* from Rarotonga - were too far out at sea to arrive in time.
>
> The sailors aboard the assembled canoes waited expectantly, maneuvering their vessels in the darkness, taking great care to keep clear of the reef outlined intermittently by white flashes of surf. Gradually the eastern horizon began to brighten, washing out the stars and bringing into focus the mountainous silhouette of Ra'iātea. Then, when the sun rose above the island's green peaks and flooded over the almost windless sea turning it from black to a deep translucent blue, the crews stirred. Taking up their paddles, they stroked toward the break in the reef known far and wide as *Te Avamo'a* (literally, the Sacred Pass), into the lagoon that leads to Taputapuātea, a great stone temple built just beyond the shore.
>
> Leading the procession was *Te Aurere*, the canoe from Aotearoa. As its twin hulls passed between the coral heads at the opening of the pass, Te Ao Pēhi Kara[259], a Māori elder, began to chant . . .

The pan-Pacific gathering of double-hulled voyaging canoes at the island of Ra'iātea in early 1995 was an exceptional event, "to symbolize that the revival of Polynesian voyaging was fully launched, as well as to reestablish Taputapuātea as the sacred center of a reconstituted Friendly Alliance of Polynesian peoples" (Finney 1999: 18).[260] Jack Thatcher (1995: A-15) recalled, that

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[259] Te Ao Pēhi Kaha was "the knowledgeable Māori elder" selected to "compose and then chant the words needed to lift the voyaging tapu as *Te Aurere* was entering the pass" (Finney 1999: 20).

[260] The so-called "Friendly Alliance" is believed to have stretched between Polynesian islands across the Polynesian Triangle. This alliance is said to have ceased to function as a result of a *tapu*, which, according to oral traditions, had been placed at Taputapuātea marae many centuries ago. The *tapu* is said to have put an end to pan-Pacific gatherings at the sacred stone temple, and the meetings of the "Friendly Alliance" at Raiātea island hence became legendary and the place eventually deserted. The aim of the ritual, conducted by the contemporary descendants of the original Polynesian voyaging canoes in early 1995, was to finally lift this ancient voyaging *tapu* and hence to reopen ancient Polynesian voyaging links. Representatives from various islands, including those of the *waka* (Finney 1999: 20), gathered together for the official lifting of this ancient voyaging *tapu* at Taputapuātea marae (described in great detail in Finney's 1999 account). Contemporary local interpretations of the oral traditions from Raiātea have associated the *tapu*, which is believed to have caused the break up of the "Friendly Alliance" (Finney 1999: 24), with the Māori of Ao-tea-roa (Finney 1999: 24). Hence

"[b]y visiting these island communities, and sharing with them our taonga and our cultures, we were able to live up to this sentiment. . . . We all came together to exchange cultures and to be the one Pacific Family".

From its early beginnings the Māori voyaging *waka*, *Te Aurere*, in contrast to *Hawaiki Nui*, has been part of an interconnected Pacific-wide renaissance of twin-hulled voyaging. Like many other contemporary Polynesian voyaging projects, *Te Aurere* benefited greatly from the knowledge and expertise that the PVS has accumulated over the past three decades, and from their strong initiatives to support voyaging projects Pacific-wide.[261]

Over the years, the PVS has achieved some major breakthroughs in the recovery of knowledge about ancient Polynesian voyaging techniques and traditions, and has further developed a strong, and highly beneficial, emphasis on education (e.g., training voyages and other educational initiatives with students in Hawai'i).[262] Founded in Hawai'i in 1973, the Society's ongoing commitment to the study and practice of canoe-building, sailing, and non-instrumental navigation techniques, has resulted in a unique collection of well-documented voyages. On the one hand, these Pacific-wide experimental voyages have provided us with vital information, which have contributed greatly to our scientific understanding of the Pacific voyaging past. On the other hand, these same voyages have inspired a blossoming contemporary revival in twin-hulled voyaging and provided it with the necessary tools. The success of the experimental voyages, such as conducted with *Hōkūle'a* since 1976 and other Hawai'ian replicas, has inspired similar initiatives in several other Pacific regions. In Aotearoa, the Māori *waka hourua*, *Te Aurere*, is the local manifestation of a voyaging revival which disseminated into the Pacific in *Hōkūle'a*'s wake.

6.5.1 Navigating to Hawai'i

Six contemporary Polynesian voyaging canoes took part in a traditionally navigated voyage leaving Nuku Hiva on 19 April 1995 and arriving in the Hawai'ian Islands on 13 May 1995. These *waka* were *Hōkūle'a*, *Hawai'iloa* and *Makali'i* from Hawai'i; *Takitumu* and *Te Au O*

Te Aurere and her Māori crew became the key to the *tapu*-lifting ceremony at Taputapuātea, representing their ancestors of old from "The-light-land". (For further details, see Finney 1999.)

[261] See chapter 4.7.1 this thesis.

[262] See the Internet website of the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS-website) for detailed information.

Tonga from the Cook Islands; and *Te Aurere* from Aotearoa.[263] The purpose of this voyage, as formulated by Thatcher (1995: A-16), was

> . . . to test a small number of Polynesian men and women who had been learning traditional non-instrument celestial navigation. Their test was over the 2,200 nautical mile leg from Nukuhiva to Hawai'i, each waka being navigated by two crew members from each Island nation represented.

The six participating voyaging canoe replicas were sailed from Tahiti to Hawai'i using traditional navigation techniques, navigated by Nainoa Thompson's pan-Pacific students. *Te Aurere* was guided by Jack Thatcher and Philip ('Piripi') Evans. Thatcher remembers, that "[f]or three years Nainoa [Thompson] just drilled us [the student navigators from across Polynesia] with all the information we needed to actually do that one voyage" (WMENAV1***). The student navigators applied traditional wayfinding techniques as derived from the Satawalese master navigator Mau Piailug. Piailug's most famous student, Nainoa Thompson from Hawai'i, developed the master navigator's teachings into a system, which he subsequently used to pass his skills on to the future navigators of other Polynesian voyaging canoe projects.[264] According to David Lewis (*PVMS 1996*: 39), Thompson "modified" the Micronesian navigation "to fit in with the requirements of modern literate educated people who were used to degrees, to instruments and so on" (see, for example, Fig. 6.4). But, nevertheless, as Lewis explicitly stated, "the navigation developed or passed on through Mau Piailug and Nainoa Thompson is true non-instrument navigation" (*PVMS 1996*: 39).

Busby remarked,

> The unique thing about our route from the Marquesas to Hawaii, you don't really have to worry too much about your speed, because you know exactly where you're gonna turn. You just turn when you get there [to the right latitude]. (Busby 1995: 9)

Thatcher (*PVMS 1996*: 43) described the conditions for navigating the 18-day voyage in respect to the sea, the weather and star-visibility as "quite easy". Throughout the voyage the modern-day traditional wayfinders had to make sure that they stayed far enough east, in order to arrive east of the Hawai'ian Islands. When reaching the latitude of the southernmost Hawai'ian

[263] The Tahitian voyaging canoe *Tahiti Nui* had to miss the voyage due to her lack of seaworthiness (pers. comm. Margaret Hicks; see chapter 2.8.3 this thesis).
[264] See, for instance, Will Kyselka (1987) for details on Nainoa Thompson's wayfinding techniques.

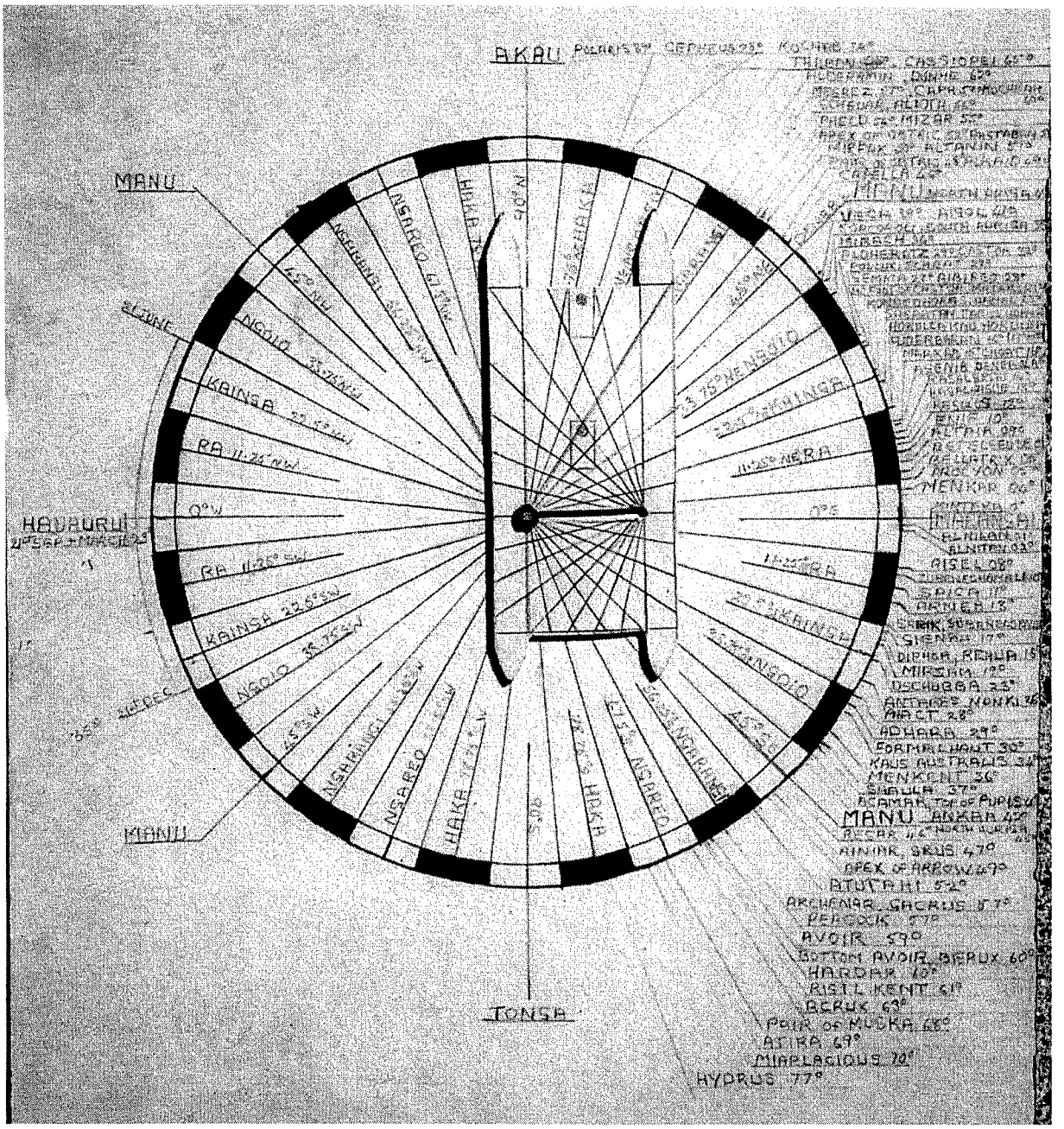

Fig. 6.4. *Te Aurere's star-compass, adapted from the Hawaiian star-compass and accordingly devided into six houses (every 11.25 degrees): Haka, Nga Reo , Nga Rangi, Ngoio, Kainga and Ra. On the right the rising positions of the most prominent stars used for Te Aurere's navigation. The waka hourua model can be lined up within this compass. When using this system on board, the navigator lines up actual points on board (as indicated on the model) with the imagined course and the rising stars. (Photograph by Sally Andrew)*

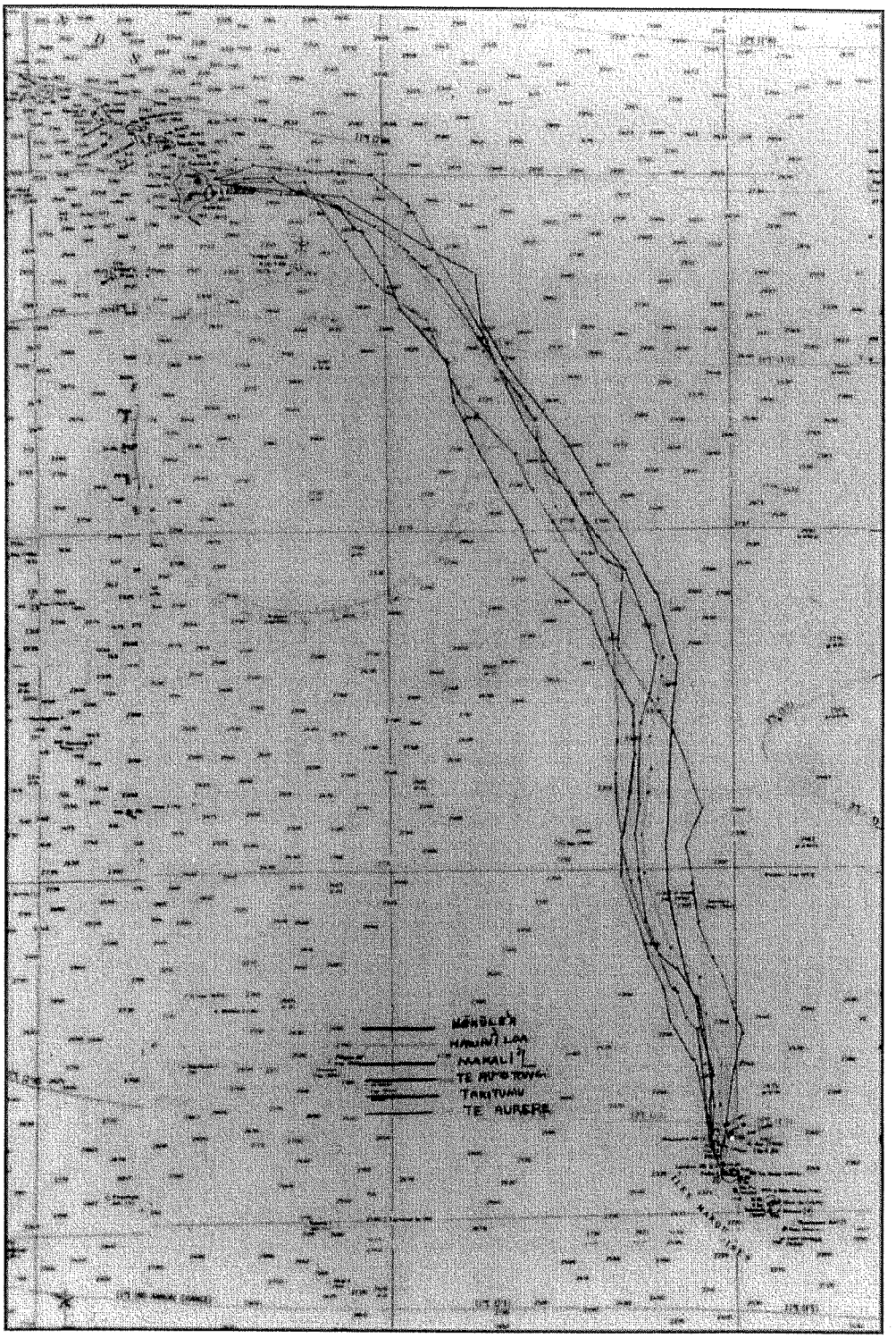

Fig. 6.5. *1995: The tracks of the six Polynesian voyaging canoes (Hōkūle'a, Hawai'iloa, Makali'i, Te Au O Tonga, Takitumu and Te Aurere) which sailed from Nuku Hiva to Hawai'i employing non-instrumental navigation methods. (Note their method of turning west after reaching the latitude of their destination.) (Photograph by Sally Andrew)*

island, the canoes turned west, keeping the same latitude until reaching the longitude of their destination island (see Fig. 6.5). If the dead reckoning (and accordingly, the sailing strategy employed) is accurate (i.e. correctly estimates the *waka*'s leeway)[265] and the right latitude is reached, this strategy is a guarantee for success; provided there are no unusual or unforeseen wind and weather alterations which force the vessel off course or confuse the navigator as to the vessel's longitudinal position. Even Andrew Sharp, the great sceptic of deliberate Polynesian settlement voyages and navigational skills, remarked that "[o]n west-east and east-west courses, the voyagers could gauge their broad direction at night by keeping their vessels in line with the east-west path of stars that passed overhead in that latitude" (Sharp 1963: 48). In this case all of Nainoa Thompson's student navigators guided their canoes without using any instruments and subsequently made landfall on the Big Island of Hawai'i.

6.5.2 A Historical Voyage

As Busby comments, "[a]lthough the [original] idea of the whole trip was the testing of navigational skills, it's gonna be more historical" (Busby 1995: 6). It was the first long-distance ocean voyage representing canoes from Hawai'i, Tahiti, the Cook Islands and Aotearoa. As Nainoa Thompson asserted,

> The four nations that sailed this time are building an alliance, a voyaging alliance. The idea is a mechanism, which keeps the sailing traditions going, but also a mechanism to include other nations. Maybe this is just the beginning.
> (Thompson cited in Markowitz 1995: 44)

Following the lifting of the ancient *tapu* at Taputapu'ātea *marae* at Ra'iatea, this voyage represented a spiritual reunion, reminding Polynesian people of their collective past. Waiting in heavy rain, 4000 Pacific Island people greeted the arrival of the canoes at Kualoa Beach, Hawai'i (pers. comm. Thompson).

> These voyaging canoes are the origins of our people here in Hawaii. They are a historical link, which kept our Polynesian people connected. They are now the contemporary link that reunites us at a critical time in many Polynesian cultures.
> (Bill Wallace, a "Hawaiian leader", cited in Markowitz 1995: 44)

Nainoa Thompson expressed their mission for the future:

[265] The assessment of the longitudinal displacement of the *waka* (east or west) has to be fairly accurate for this method to be successful. For example, if a canoe hits the right latitude, turns west, on the assumption that they

> We are one single nation coming together that has been split apart maybe a couple of hundred years ago. In their time, the Polynesians were the greatest explorers. We are trying hard to sail in the wake of our ancestry. In doing so, we are collecting people and bringing them back together. . . . This is probably the most special of all trips. So many canoes, so many different people. (Markowitz 1995: 44)

From Busby's perspective, "meeting up with our relations from Hawai'i and Tahiti and Rarotonga" has been an eye-opening experience for Māori today (Busby 1995: 7):

> We can communicate with them no problem. . . . [T]hey understand it [our language, *te reo Māori*] way on the other side [of the Pacific]. Makes you think twice eh. . . . It's a rediscovery of the connection of the Pacific Island people. (Busby 1995: 7)

6.5.3 Pacific navigation: Mau Piailug's legacy[266]

From a scientific perspective, the voyage from Nuku Hiva (Marquesas) to Hawai'i not only demonstrated the seaworthiness of traditional designs, but also the viability of non-instrumental navigational techniques. A new generation of young navigators set out to test their skills on the legendary leg between Tahiti and Hawai'i. Their success is the result of a revival in traditional navigation, which started to flourish again when Mau Piailug, the Micronesian navigator, broke with local traditions and decided to share his navigational knowledge and expertise with other Pacific Islanders to prevent these skills from vanishing.[267] Mau Piailug made the following comment (in Satawalese, which was simultanously translated by an interpreter) at the arrival of the six voyaging canoes:

> Now we're happy like we're reborn again. Our navigational skills are reborn again. I never forgot when I first came to Hawaii, there were no navigational skills. Today we're happy. It's like bringing back skills from those who passed away. We're lucky we still have people who know navigation. So let's teach our young kids our skills. Let's not forget our skills so they won't die again. (cited in Andrew 1995: 47)

Only recently did the now 68-year-old Mau Piailug again stress the responsibility for this new generation of non-instrumental navigators. Piailug has freely given his knowledge to interested

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are east of Hawai'i, when in actual fact they are west of it, then this canoe will completely miss its destination.

[266] This title is adapted from *Mau's Legacy and Importance of Education* (PVS-website: *rapanui/legacy.html*).

[267] In the Carolines Islands (and elsewhere in the Pacific), specialist knowledge, such as non-instrumental navigation techniques, is widely regarded as a family asset. To assure its survival, as well as the status of the family, such knowledge is traditionally passed down from one generation to the next. Hence, under normal circumstances, this type of knowledge is not shared with outsiders. By breaking with tradition (for the sake of the revival and survival of traditional navigation techniques Pacific-wide), Mau Piailug has sacrificed much of his local status. (pers. comm. LeNoel)

students regardless of where they came from, and the only thing he asks in return is for them to make an effort to keep this knowledge alive: "I told them when they take this [navigational knowledge] from me, then they [should] give [it] to the young kids because I don't like it [to] stay lost again" (Creamer 2000). By receiving this ancient knowledge, Thompson's pan-Pacific students, such as Jack Thatcher and Piripi Evans from Aotearoa, have made a lifetime promise - perhaps less to Mau Piailug himself than to the coming generations in their own islands. As Thompson (PVS-website: *rapanui/legacy.html*) aptly remarked, "[m]astery is not accomplishment, it's responsibility".

Whether *Te Aurere*'s navigators are going to be able to honour this pan-Pacific commitment in Aotearoa depends largely upon Hector Busby himself. In Busby's opinion, practising the seafaring knowledge of old and maintaining the Māori language are significant cultural skills for contemporary Māori. In the long run, upholding these practices will have a positive effect on the cultural survival of the Māori peoples.

> As far as I'm concerned, knowing/dreaming about how ancestors got here and keeping our language alive, those are the two things that will keep the culture going, just those two simple things. (Busby 1995: 7)

6.5.4 Navigating *Te Aurere* to Aotearoa

Busby remembers that "a lot of time" was spent in the doldrums (Busby 1995: 8). But the overall conditions of the voyage (from the Marquesas to Hawai'i and back via the Cook Islands to Aotearoa) were positive, especially when compared to the bad storms they experienced in 1992. This time around, they had "no problems with the oceans . . . just a couple of rough days the week before we got in" (Busby 1995: 8).

Coming back to Aotearoa from Rarotonga the conditions were "terrible for traditional navigation" (Busby 1995: 9). Busby comments, "this passage from Rarotonga, it's a hard one" (Busby 1995: 9). They not only experienced predominantly cloud-covered skies throughout this leg, they had four wind shifts in a day "and then no swells" (Busby 1995: 9). Busby remembers, "we had to heave to and wait for a glimpse of a star" (Busby 1995: 9). When they got closer to Aotearoa, they used "the Southern Cross when it was horizontal and the two pointers down below, pointing up to the cross" (Busby 1995: 10). Their method to determine

their exact latitude was to measure "the bottom pointer down to the horizon" (Busby 1995: 10). It is important to be accurate, when turning towards the presumed landmass. But Busby remembers using another important indicator for land, "those birds told a bit of a tale" (Busby 1995: 10).

The 1995 voyage was a huge challenge for *Te Aurere's* freshly trained traditional navigators, Jack ('Jacko') Thatcher and Piripi Evans. Jack commented in retrospective that the leg from the Marquesas to Hawai'i was a great trip. It was remarkable because "the stars were all out" and hence, in respect to navigation by the stars, the voyage was a "booster" (pers. comm. Thatcher). The leg from Hawai'i to Rarotonga was overshadowed by the doldrums, where they spent a considerable period of time. But during this particular leg, Thatcher felt that the knowledge studied and their experience were adding up and he started to gain real confidence. By the time they sailed from Rarotonga back to Aotearoa he felt that "everything had fallen into place" and though the conditions changed quite frequently, he felt confident in guiding the canoe because of the increasing amount of signs he was able to recognise and interpret (pers. comm. Thatcher). Furthermore, Thatcher made a remarkable discovery when they returned to Aotearoa. During one of the countless long nights he spent on deck, Thatcher kept himself alert by singing a *waiata* he had learned as a schoolchild. He was greatly surprised when he realized that this particular *waiata* actually repeated the Māori names of some of the stars and constellations he had now come to be familiar with. He was even more amazed when he discovered that the order in which these stars were recited guided a *waka* coming from Central Polynesia to Aotearoa (pers. comm. Thatcher). One by one they appeared above the horizon, just as revealed in his childhood *waiata*.[268]

Overall, the voyage was a great success, reconfirming the Māori navigational lore as well as the ancient wayfinding techniques derived from Mau Piailug (and spread Pacific-wide by Nainoa

[268] Thatcher (*PWMS 1996*: 41f.) recalls the beginning of this *waiata* as follows:

> *Takinga mai ra ko nga hui a Matariki,*
> *Tuanga, Tauturu, Kangaroa-Atutahi,*
> *Mai Karewa, te tini o te whetu ariki.*
> [Shining from above, the gathering of Pleiades,
> Rigel, Orion's belt, *Kangaroa Atutahi*,
> The brightness of Sirius shining above, many are the chiefly stars above.
> (translation by Thatcher; see *PWMS 1996*: 41f.)]

Waiata are a promising area for further research in respect to Māori voyaging. As this example indicates, there is some crucial information encoded in these historic *waiata* which is worthy of more detailed investigation.

Thompson). Coming from Central Polynesia, they decided to follow Kupe's sailing directions which, according to Busby (1995: 9), say "to leave just before the start of the cyclone season and to sail to the right of the setting sun, with Venus as a steering marker, and then turn south". These instructions proved to be sufficient to reach their home, Aotearoa. Busby (1995: 9) remembers, "on the 20th day out from Rarotonga the sun set slightly higher than the horizon, as it dipped behind Cape Reinga. We were spot on." The timing of these voyages from Central Polynesia appears to have been rather crucial.[269] As Busby (1995: 9) remarks, "I can always remember our elders saying that our ancestors arrived here when the pohutukawa was in bloom" (see Finney 1994b: 56f., 68f.).

6.6 Aotearoa 1996 - 1999

6.6.1 Local Voyages

In 1996 *Te Aurere* went on several coastal voyages around the Bay of Plenty region (pers. comm. Aramoana) as well as featuring during the Waka Moana Symposium held at the Auckland Maritime Museum in March 1996.[270] After the symposium, *Te Aurere* eventually returned to Northland. The following year *Te Aurere* went on short voyages around Tai Tokerau region, in which I participated as a crew member. In general, these trips had a specific purpose and the *waka hourua* was taken everywhere to act as a cultural symbol. For example, *Te Aurere* featured at the 1997 Smokefree Waka Ama National Championships at Parua Bay, Whangarei. In honour of the 10th anniversary of the revival of *waka ama*, Aotearoa's only voyaging *waka hourua* featured during the *pōwhiri* and the official opening ceremony at the Whangarei Marina on 21 January 1997. On arrival, *Te Aurere* crew performed their *haka* on board the *waka,* in support of Hec Busby's speech and the very special occasion. The same day *Te Aurere* sailed out to Parua Bay and anchoring inside the bay, subsequently acted as a beacon during the championships, before she sailed on to the Waitangi celebrations. Shortly after, a crew of fifteen (including myself) was selected to sail *Te Aurere* from Whangarei to Waitangi on 1 February 1997. On Waitangi Day, *Te Aurere* was temporarily anchored in front of Te Tii

[269] For more detail see 4.2.1 this thesis.

[270] At this symposium I first made contact with *Te Aurere*'s crew and, following their kind invitation, I stayed on the *waka hourua* itself and lived with the crew for the duration of the symposium.

marae. Subsequently the *waka hourua* was moored at Opua Harbour where she stayed until the Waitangi celebrations were over.

Finally, during January and February in 1998, *Te Aurere* circumnavigated Te-Ika-a-Māui, the North Island. The purpose of the voyage was to appear at the dawn ceremony for the opening of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, an event which captured the nation's attention at the time.[271] Since I left Northland in August 1998, *Te Aurere* has participated in one other national event. Together with the Cook Island voyaging canoe *Te Au o Tonga* (built and navigated by Sir Tom Davis), *Te Aurere* has featured at the Millenium dawn ceremony in Gisborne. Again, several *waka taua* and *waka ama* were present at this occasion as well. At present, Busby is constructing another *waka hourua* from native timber, based at Aurere in Doubtless Bay (pers. comm. Busby).[272]

6.6.1.1 *Sponsorship*

Beginning in 1992, *Te Aurere* has received sponsorship from "Lifespan Smokefree". The Smokefree - organisation provided a "lump sum" of money as well as the radios, wet weather gear and the rigging (Busby 1998b: tape 1). Busby commented, "if it wasn't for 'Smokefree' we would have never made that trip to Raro [Rarotonga 1992]" (Busby 1998b: tape 1). Another major sponsor was Air New Zealand, who contributed to *Te Aurere's* pan-Pacific voyage in 1995. But overall, according to Busby, most of the money spent on *Te Aurere* over the years was his own. He explained to me that he received less than $NZ 500,000 in outside funding. By contrast, from the felling of the trees until 1998 his estimate of costs exceeded $NZ 1,000,000. So far $NZ 60,000 had been spent on airfares alone, just to enable the project to exchange crew members during pan-Pacific voyages (Busby 1998b: tape 2). Indirect government funding had been obtained throughout the lifetime of the project by utilising government work-schemes (e.g., Maccess, which was heavily relied upon during the building process between 1991 and 1992). Furthermore, a considerable number of crew members have at times depended on

[271] See the prelude and introduction to this thesis.

[272] In recent years plans were made for several overseas voyages. In 1997, a proposed trip to the Norfolk Islands was cancelled due to a number of tropical cyclones. A second overseas voyage to take *Te Aurere* across the Tasman Sea to Australia (planned for October 1997) was also cancelled, but this time due to the lack of funding. And finally, in 1999, Busby's ambitious goal for *Te Aurere* to meet up with *Hōkūle'a* in the Marquesas and to join the legendary Hawai'ian voyaging canoe replica on her most recent voyage to Rapanui (Easter Island), could not be reached, again due to a lack of funding.

unemployment benefits. In a number of cases the 'institutionalised dole' has enabled interested individuals to participate as crew members in such a major undertaking. Finally, *Toi Māori Aotearoa*, the national body for Māori Arts, receives annual *Creative New Zealand* (CNZ)[273] funds to establish and operate Māori art and cultural committees (n.a. *Kia Hiwa Ra*, Dec. 95/Jan. 96:12). *Toi Māori* has funded *Te Aurere*'s *wānanga* (Busby 1998a), 'live-ins' regularly held at *marae* or elsewhere, to promote *Te Aurere* and to revive the seafaring knowledge around the country.

6.6.2 *Wānanga*

Since *Te Aurere's* first voyage, *wānanga*[274] have been conducted for general education and to prepare for future voyages.[275] These *wānanga* aim at building up a foundation of knowledge and practice amongst the participants, on which a later voyaging crew relies. Participation in the *wānanga* (held at differing locations) is the actual groundwork that has to be covered by any potential crew member, but especially by those lacking prior seafaring experience.

During the time of my fieldwork a strong emphasis was placed on teaching and practising traditional navigation techniques, as well as teaching safety measures, crew-responsibilities and general information pertaining to previous voyages and Māori and Polynesian voyaging. At times short voyages were conducted (usually not exceeding a day-trip) to practise rigging, sailing, and simply to give participants a chance to experience what it is like to be on a *waka hourua*. At other times *wānanga* may be called to maintain the canoe. The participants arrive to do hands-on work (such as cleaning, painting and repairs) on the vessel itself, as well as to conduct meetings, plan the future of the project and to refresh their memories on star-navigation at night-time. These *wānanga* always last from a Friday evening to a Sunday, and are usually held at Aurere, Doubtless Bay itself, with the *waka hourua* at its mooring in Aurere river, next to Busby's workshops (see, for example, Fig. 6.6 & Fig. 6.7).

[273] *Creative New Zealand* (CNZ) has two autonomous boards, *Te Waka Toi* and the Arts Board, which allocate the available annual funding to arts organisations in New Zealand (n.a. *Kia Hiwa Ra*, Dec. 95/Jan.96:12).
[274] *Wānanga* has been translated as "the higher and sacred knowledge, and to recite that knowledge" (Whatahoro and Smith 1915: 80). In contemporary New Zealand, universities are referred to as *Whare Wānanga*, perhaps best translated as 'house of learning' or 'house of teaching', but strictly in respect to higher knowledge. (Whatahoro and Smith 1915: 80) Traditionally the *whare wānanga* is believed to have been an ancient Māori institution, a "Maori College", where the *tohunga* (priest, teacher, expert in tribal lore) passed on his knowledge to selected individuals only (Whatahoro and Smith 1915:i).
[275] Robert Gable, a local accountant, is the coordinator for the *wānanga* and the *pānui* (invitations).

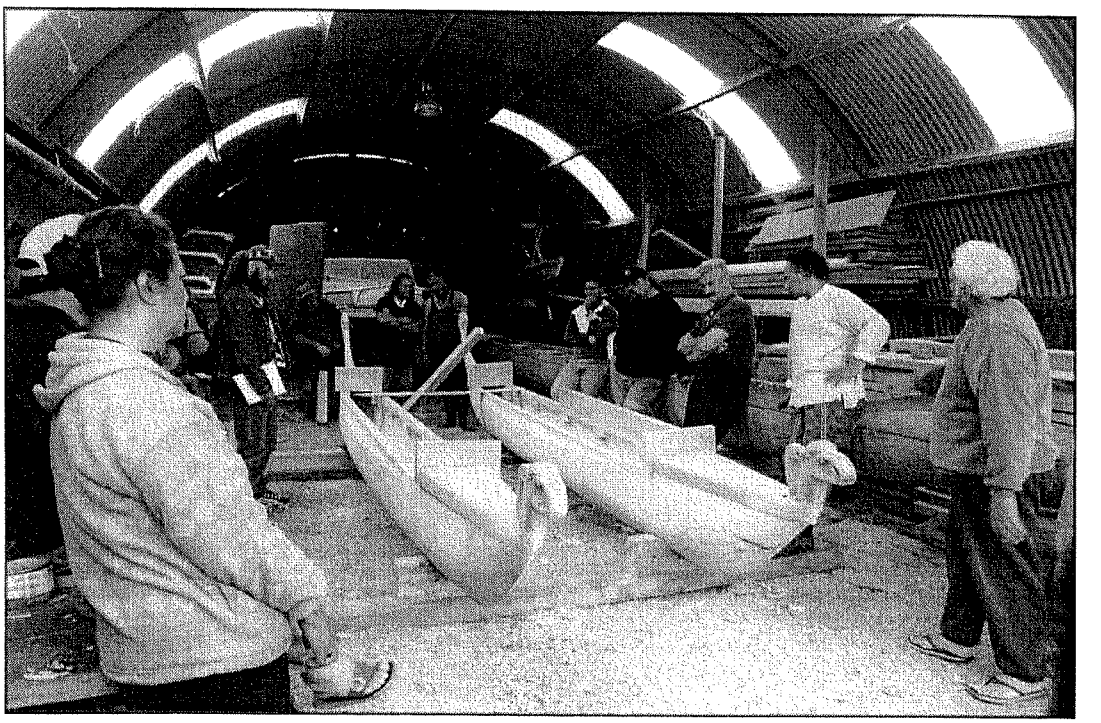

Fig. 6.6. *Aurere, May 1998: Wānanga participants gathered in Busby's work shop to discuss Te Aurere Iti, the small replica of Te Aurere. (From the right: Tip Reedy [Wellington], unknown, Robert Gable [Kawakawa], Paul LeNoel [Pukepoto], Jack Thatcher [Tauranga], Pat Aramoana [Opotiki], Haumata Smith [Tauranga], Woody Wilson [Hawai'i], Paul Stanley [Auckland], and others.) (Photograph by author)*

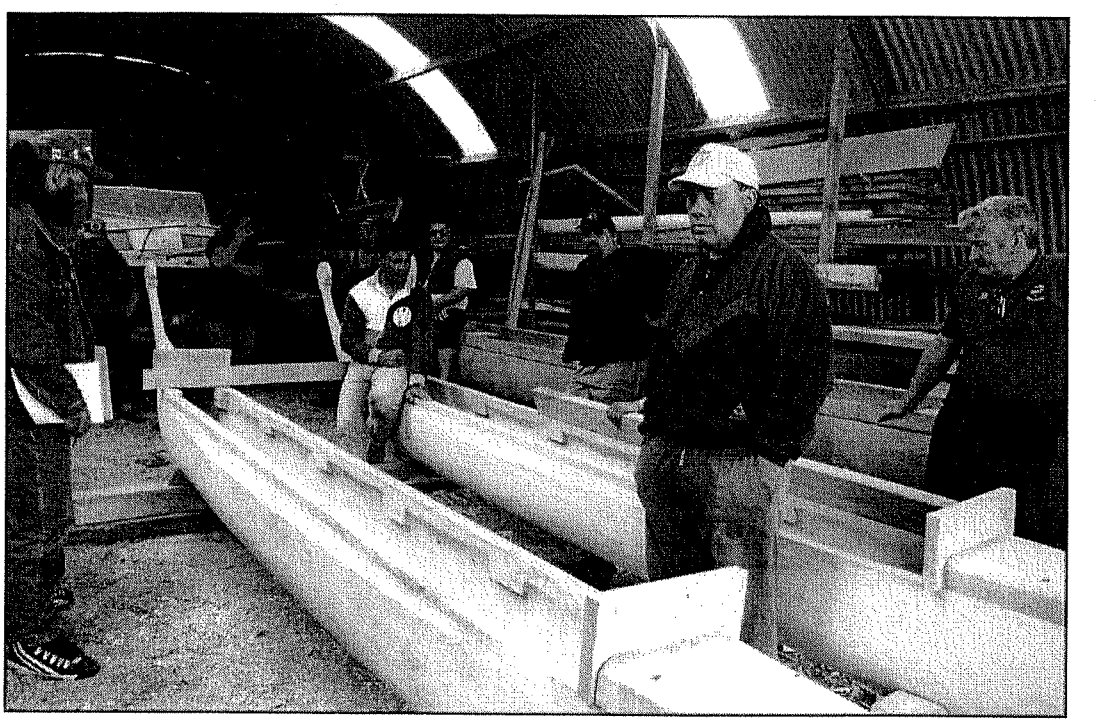

Fig. 6.7. *Te Aurere's navigator Jack Thatcher and captain Stanley Conrad answering questions about the hull-design, sailing and traditional navigation techniques. (From the right: Robert Gable, Stanley Conrad, Paul Lenoel, unknown, Jack Thatcher, Pat Aramoana, Haumata Smith, Woody Wilson and Paul Stanley.) (Photograph by author)*

At other times, the *wānanga* are held at *marae*. Between 1996 and1998 a couple of *wānanga* were also conducted in the Bay of Plenty region, in an effort to make it easier for interested people from regions further away from Northland to participate.

1996: November 22 - 24	Aurere, Doubtless Bay
1997: January 17 - 19	Ngararatunua Marae, Whangarei
1997: February 21 - 23	Mangatapu Marae, Tauranga
1997: March 14 - 16	Ngararatunua Marae, Whangarei
1998: March 20 – 22	Tu Teao Marae, Te Teko (Bay of Plenty)
1998: May 8 - 10	Aurere, Doubtless Bay
1998: November 27 - 29	Aurere, Doubtless Bay

Table 6.2. *List of Te Aurere's wānanga (held during the time of my field work).*

Between November 1996 and November 1998, three *wānanga* have been held at Aurere, Doubtless Bay, two at Ngararatunua Marae in Whangarei, one at Mangatapu Marae in Tauranga and one at Tu Teao Marae in Te Teko (Table 6.2). Except for the last one (November 1998)[276] I participated in all *wānanga* held within these two years.[277]

6.6.3 *Te Aurere Iti*

In 1997 Hector Busby and Paul LeNoel (Fig. 6.11) jointly engineered the building of a smale-scale model of *Te Aurere*, appropriately named *Te Aurere Iti, 'iti'* meaning 'small' (Fig. 6.6 & Fig. 6.7). Besides carrying out the construction under Busby's supervision, LeNoel was solely responsible for all the lashings on *Te Aurere Iti*. They built the miniature *waka hourua* to be exhibited at the newly opened Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington.

[276] At this point in time I had returned to Otago University in Dunedin to write up my MA thesis.

[277] Between April 1997 and January 1998 no official *wānanga* were held, and two proposed training voyages (17-20 April 1997 and 2-4 May 1997) had to be cancelled due to a lack of support. A *wānanga*, to be held in mid-December 1997, was also cancelled for the same reason. Nevertheless, in 1997 some particularly dedicated participants showed up unofficially at several occassions to support the construction of *Te Aurere Iti* (a miniature version of *Te Aurere* built as an exhibit for Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington). The vessel was completed at Aurere over the winter of 1997 (see 6.6.3 this thesis).

Busby experimented with *Te Aurere Iti*'s design. He recalls, "when I built *Te Aurere Iti*[278] I shaped those hulls by scale to what I wanted. And it performs better than *Te Aurere*" (Busby 1998b: tape 3). *Te Aurere Iti* has no keel and, according to Busby, answers well to steering paddle. Furthermore, her waterline is different from her bigger sister. Though *Te Aurere Iti* is deeper in the water, her shape keeps her from having too much water resistance. (Busby 1998b: tape 1)

Te Aurere Iti was not only an experiment in respect to her hulls, but also regarding her sails. These have been designed and handwoven from *harakeke*, the New Zealand flax plant, by local weavers from *Tai Tokerau*. At the end of July 1997 I participated briefly in the preparation of the flax for the weaving process in Pukepoto, together with Paul LeNoel, Pat Aramoana (Fig. 6.10), Esta Proctor and Adrienne Taiaroa (Fig. 6.8 & 6.9).[279]

Under the guidance of Adrienne and Esta, we started to put the locally cut *harakeke* together into bundles, arranging them by the different lengths of the leaves. Paul and Pat had lit a fire and maintained it, heating up a big outside bathtub with water up to a quarter level. Once the water was heated we placed the bundles into the boiling water, a couple of bundles at a time. We left these to boil for a couple of minutes each, until the structure of the leaves lost some of its stiffness. When they were ready, we carefully took them out of the water and replaced them with another couple of bundles and so forth.

The *harakeke* had to be softened even further by taking each single leaf and running it firmly over a slightly rounded hard edge, such as the blunt side of a knife's blade. This had to be repeated several times, to further soften the structure of the leaves. After this procedure, the *harakeke* was manageable enough to be used for weaving. We then hung the completed bundles onto a rope to dry the unwanted moisture out in the wind. It took a few days to prepare a large amount of *harakeke* in the way described above. It is a labour-intensive process and only thebeginning of the even more labour-intensive weaving. The local *kuia* spent a couple of months making the sails during the winter of 1997 (pers. comm. LeNoel).

[278] *Te Aurere Iti*, as the name "iti" (small) suggests, is a smaller-sized replica of *Te Aurere*, built in 1997 at the same building-site as her namesake.
[279] This took place on the farm of Paul LeNoel and his partner Karen Simpson in Pukepoto.

Fig. 6.8. *January 1997, Whangarei Heads: Crew members Esta Proctor and Adrienne Taiaroa weaving harakeke on board the waka hourua. (Their casual outfit reflects the way the crew is usually dressed on board Te Aurere.) (Photograph by author)*

Fig. 6.9. *Adrienne Taiaroa supervising Esta Proctor's weaving. (Their traditional outfit was put on especially for a film shoot.) (Photograph by author)*

Fig. 6.10. *Pat Aramoana, crew member from Tūhoe, on board the waka hourua; my mentor and principal teacher in respect to Māori culture, tikanga and te reo Māori over the years. (Photograph by author)*

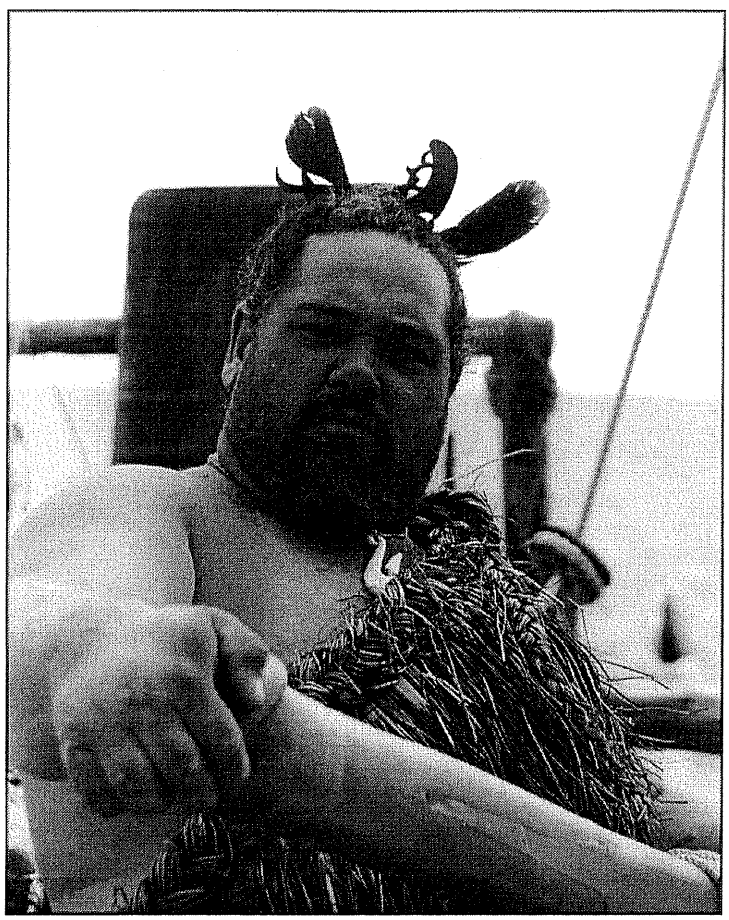

Fig. 6.11. *Lashing expert Paul LeNoel steering Te Aurere. (Photograph by author)*

Prior to presenting *Te Aurere Iti* to the Museum in November 1997, sea-trials were conducted at Doubtless Bay.[280] When the replica was transported down to Wellington on a trailer, students from Auckland University were taken on sample trips in the Auckland harbour in conjunction with a lecture by Hector Busby. The *waka* was also sailed in the Wellington harbour. Eventually *Te Aurere Iti* was presented to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington at the end of 1997.[281]

6.7 Reflection

As a crew member I became part of Te Aurere-whānau, an extended family of Māori people associated with Te Aurere. Over the years, though not a Māori, I felt I became one of the 'regulars' on the project, and I felt part of the waka, being accepted by the great majority of Māori involved. The fact that I was a tauiwi, a stranger to this land and its peoples, subsequently became something of a running joke.

> *And in the end, what it [building the Hawaiian voyaging canoe Hawai'iloa from mostly traditional materials] did was, it built the strongest sense of community around something special. (Thompson 1998)*

Being a 'regular' means to live constantly with the Māori present, past and future which surrounds the waka, even when you are physically somewhere else. Being a crew member is not only about taking part in the crew-trainings run regularly on selected weekends, it also means spending time with the Te Aurere whānau. This time might include listening to the many incredible stories told, or the memories and experiences shared on the waka (and about the waka). It might mean sitting together after a busy day, unpacking the events; or, winding down late at night after hours of gazing at the stars. It might mean processing the new and old material by sitting around a star chart that someone has pulled out, and thinking about it, discussing it, imagining the starpaths on paper, and wondering how 'they' (the ancestors) navigated here and back in the old days. After that, it might include getting up and stepping outside under the nightsky, to observe the actual movement of the stars, comparing it with the night sky studied only hours before. Countless times I have found myself listening and talking,

[280] Unfortunately I could not follow this process personally because I had to return to Germany in August 1997 and I did not return to New Zealand until early January 1998.
[281] The same year Busby completed the carvings for the meeting house of his *marae* in Kaitaia.

overcoming periods of tiredness, keeping other's awake and being kept awake, well into the early morning hours, in order to occupy our minds with everything that has the remotest link to Polynesian waka. In this process, strangers become friends and friends become closer friends. They include people from all walks of life. All of them focusing on their culture, enhanced by participation in this project, and sharing a strong, and sometimes unnamed, fascination with waka, with the Polynesian seafaring past, the early history of Māori culture. For those involved in the project, it is largely about enhancing and re-discovering aspects of their cultures, Māori and Polynesian; it is about working together with people drawn together by waka. It is about learning and transforming shared dreams and desires into a walkable path for a strong future for Māori people. This, to me, is what the human side of the canoe is about. It is about people from all walks of life who have discovered the daring dream of waka and waka-culture.

Chapter Seven

Towards the Sea

> *The culture needs to be kept alive by being practised. . . . [I]n building the canoe, we are building our culture.*
>
> Nainoa Thompson[282]

At the heart of this thesis are the life-histories of two contemporary Polynesian voyaging canoes, *Hawaiki Nui* and *Te Aurere*. Besides documenting their construction and voyages, this thesis examines the cultural perspectives of their Māori builders and participants and Māori voyaging as a cultural activity or process. For Māori, as an indigenous minority in contemporary New Zealand society, it is clearly a culturally empowering experience to revive *waka* voyaging. As indigenous researcher Rawiri Taonui has reported, there is "a new sense of pride, dignity and self-esteem gained from the replication of the deeds of long lost ancestors, upon the migratory pathways of the ocean Pacific" (Taonui 1994: 188). My research findings clearly show that *Hawaiki Nui* and *Te Aurere* are individual projects with cultural agendas of their own. Experimental objectives[283] have been present in both projects, but clearly, these were secondary for my Māori informants.

I have discussed the particular aims and perspectives of each project in its local context, while at the same time highlighting the historical and cultural significance of *waka* for Māori and other indigenous Pacific peoples. These are themes which have been evident in both projects. Nevertheless, my framework locates the projects within the general contemporary socio-political context and is designed to produce an understanding of the neo-colonial realities experienced by an overwhelming majority of Māori voyaging participants. Social, cultural and political tensions generally present between Māori and Pākehā New Zealanders become particularly obvious in the context of these two voyaging canoe projects.

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[282] Cited in Bishop Museum-website

[283] Nevertheless, as Finney (1994b: 73) asserted:

> The voyages of Hōkūle'a, as well as those of Hawaiki-Nui and Te Aurere, are leading to a more realistic appraisal of Polynesian voyaging capabilities which is beginning to have an impact on ideas.

A detailed and comprehensive documentation of the life-histories of *Hawaiki Nui* and *Te Aurere* has seemed long overdue. My decision to investigate these voyaging projects based in Aotearoa New Zealand was motivated by the following observations. Firstly, *Hawaiki Nui* and *Te Aurere* are historically significant projects, not just for Māori but, as I argue, for New Zealanders as a whole. Voyaging *waka* constituted an important feature of the history of this land. They provided the means by which the first human settlers arrived in Aotearoa, and are the foundation of human societies elsewhere in the Pacific. It can be argued, therefore, that voyaging *waka* deserve to be a central part of Aotearoa New Zealand's contemporary national identity, even though the majority Pākehā population remain largely unaware of it. Given the significance of *waka*, it seems appropriate that the current revival of voyaging should be documented, discussed and recognised as a nationally significant endeavour in this thesis. Haare Williams (cited in Wilson 1990: 24) stated, that "[t]hough distinctively Maori, . . . as symbols the waka belong to the whole nation". In my view, modern voyaging *waka* serve as a floating classroom and a *tūrangawaewae*, a place to stand for Māori. And like *waka ama*, they also provide opportunities for people of diverse cultural backgrounds to gain an in-depth understanding and appreciation of Polynesian cultures.

Secondly, *waka* have always been an important cultural and socio-political tool of Māori and other Polynesian societies; a role which evidently continued long *after* the settlement of various islands and island groups in the Pacific (see, for example, Murdoch 1999). In the case of Aotearoa New Zealand, the continuing significance of *waka* in seeding and defining *iwi*-based Māori cultural identities is the fertile soil on which the present local revival of Polynesian voyaging can grow. *Waka*, just like *marae* (Salmond 1976), are one of the few restricted social contexts defined and organised by Māori cultural principles in contemporary New Zealand society. This has also become evident with the reintroduction of *waka ama* to Aotearoa New Zealand. An understanding of the revival of *waka*, I believe, contributes to a better understanding of Māori cultures and the contemporary concerns and ambitions of Māori and other indigenous Pacific Islands' minorities. As the Hawaiian navigator Nainoa Thompson (PVS-website) suggested,

> The same principles of exploration our ancestors followed in the past must carry Pacific people forward, exploring, discovering, and taking on the challenges of time.

Thirdly, the revival of *waka* voyaging is a tremendous challenge in every sense of the word. This is well illustrated by the two projects documented in this thesis. As Norman (1995: 131-132) has noted:

> The cost of these projects [replica canoes built from ancient designs] is huge both in terms of the financial burden and the personal investment of the visionaries who had the dream, developed the skills and steered the projects to successful conclusions.

The cultural significance of the revival of Māori voyaging is underlined by the determination and perseverance of Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell and Hekenukumai Busby in reconstructing these ancient vessels.

Fourthly, contemporary Polynesian *waka* projects, such as these two voyaging canoes initiated by Māori, also have specific implications for other Pacific Island nations. For them, too, oceanic voyaging is part of a process of cultural revival. Voyaging projects can be seen as a tool to enhance pan-Pacific communication.

> Canoe voyaging is the centre of a great revival of Polynesian culture in the Pacific. Relearning the art of sailing safely to islands far over the horizon in traditional craft has been a spiritual experience for all those involved. The rituals and taboos associated with canoe building and voyaging connect modern day people to the traditions of their ancestors. (Andrew 1996c: 56)

Contemporary voyaging raises an awareness of common cultural roots and origins amongst the descendants of the ancient Polynesian seafarers while, at the same time, addressing contemporary sociopolitical issues. In Oceania, the contemporary voyaging canoes have become potent political symbols. As Jocelyn Linnekin (1990: 167) aptly commented,

> The evolution of the Polynesian voyaging canoe as a political symbol in recent years encapsulates the move from less encompassing identities to broader levels of association, and illustrates the cross-fertilization of ideas that characterizes contemporary Oceanic politics.

Both projects discussed in this thesis have developed links to other Polynesian (voyaging) communities, such as Tahiti (in the case of *Hawaiki Nui*) and Hawai'i (in the case of *Te Aurere*).

Waka do not know boundaries, rather, they are used to transgress what - from a Western perspective - may be perceived as a geographic boundary: the ocean. But as Finney (1976: 9)

pointed out, "Pacific Islanders were able to treat the ocean as an avenue, not a barrier, to communication". Contemporary Māori (and other Polynesians) are reviving these traditional seafaring skills. They are also reviving a distinctive Polynesian world view. But the process of cultural retrieval can be difficult. After *Hōkūle'a*'s first voyage to Tahiti, Herb Kawainui Kane[284] (cited in Prince 1976: 10) commented,

> You learn to crawl before you learn to walk. We don't claim to be the experts like the ancient Polynesians. They had skills we don't have today. . . . It can't be done all at once. We're taking it a step at a time instead of trying to do it all at once.

Within New Zealand, strong distinctions between Polynesian migrant communities of different island origins (such as the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga) and the Māori of Aotearoa are well maintained. However, in the context of contemporary *waka* voyaging, these cultural distinctions become less relevant; to the extent that they are almost non-existent. Instead, the emphasis has shifted to a shared Polynesian seafaring heritage, which is strengthening an awareness of pan-Pacific cultural traits and origins. In the context of *Hawaiki Nui*'s and *Te Aurere*'s construction and voyages, Māori have recognised a broader Polynesian cultural identity. Both these voyaging *waka* successfully renewed contacts with their *whanaunga* (relations) Pacific-wide. I find that in the context of *waka* voyaging, Māori celebrate their bonds with other indigenous Pacific Islanders, rather than focusing on their differences. My findings confirm the ongoing significance of *whakapapa* (genealogy ties) and *whanaungatanga* (sense of belonging); cultural concepts which connect Māori and other Polynesian people Pacific-wide. Instead of focussing on being part of an ethnic minority in Aotearoa New Zealand, contemporary Māori voyaging participants increasingly view themselves as being part of closely related Polynesian cultures.

The blossoming pan-Pacific voyaging network which is evident in the contemporary Pacific is closely interwoven with the spreading sense of a pan-Pacific cultural identity. Rather than maintaining a strong emphasis on their local identities, geographically defined by physical boundaries of islands and island groups, these modern-day voyagers (like their prehistoric ancestors) have shifted their focus back to where they originated from, into the larger "sea of islands" (Hau'ofa 1994: 152). The evolving sense of a pan-Pacific community is strong, and

[284] Kane is a well-known Hawaiian artist, who, as one of the founding fathers of the Polynesian Voyaging Society in 1973, was responsible for "the research and the artistic design" of *Hōkūle'a* (Haugen 1976: 37).

may grow even stronger as voyages continue and new projects emerge - not only in Aotearoa New Zealand but throughout the Pacific.

The idea of shared origins between contemporary Polynesian communities is a particularly powerful concept within this revival of voyaging. Given the neo-colonial or post-colonial conditions that most indigenous Pacific peoples now live under, the revival of a strong symbol of joint cultural identities, such as the *waka*, does not appear coincidental. Kane expressed his belief at a very early stage, that "the canoe is emerging as the central figure in the revival of cultures of the Pacific Islands people" (cited in Haugen 1976: 38).

An understanding of *waka* as a cultural concept, a Pacific symbol of shared origins, is inevitable in the wake of these contemporary Polynesian voyaging canoes – at least this is the meaning these voyages have for the indigenous participants and indigenous witnesses of their arrivals and departures. *Waka* have always been a highly significant artefact in Polynesian societies, used to negotiate geographic, social, cultural and political spheres. Looking at contemporary voyages and the motivations of indigenous voyagers, this has not changed. Voyaging *waka* have reemerged, and again they are linking pan-Pacific island communities (or, nowadays, indigenous ethnic minorities); playing their part in the politics of Pacific Islanders' cultural revival. In more than one way *Hawaiki Nui*, as well as *Te Aurere*, have been revisiting the traditional "pathway" of Oceanic cultures. As Epeli Hau'ofa (1998: 409) says:

> . . . above that level of everyday experience, the sea is our [Pacific Islanders'] pathway to each other and to everyone else . . .

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